



Student Newspaper • Volume 4 / 1st Edition | March 2024

# Dintshang

## Induction Workshop for Members of ISGS

## Physiotherapy Prize-Giving *Ceremony*

## Message from the Vice-Chancellor

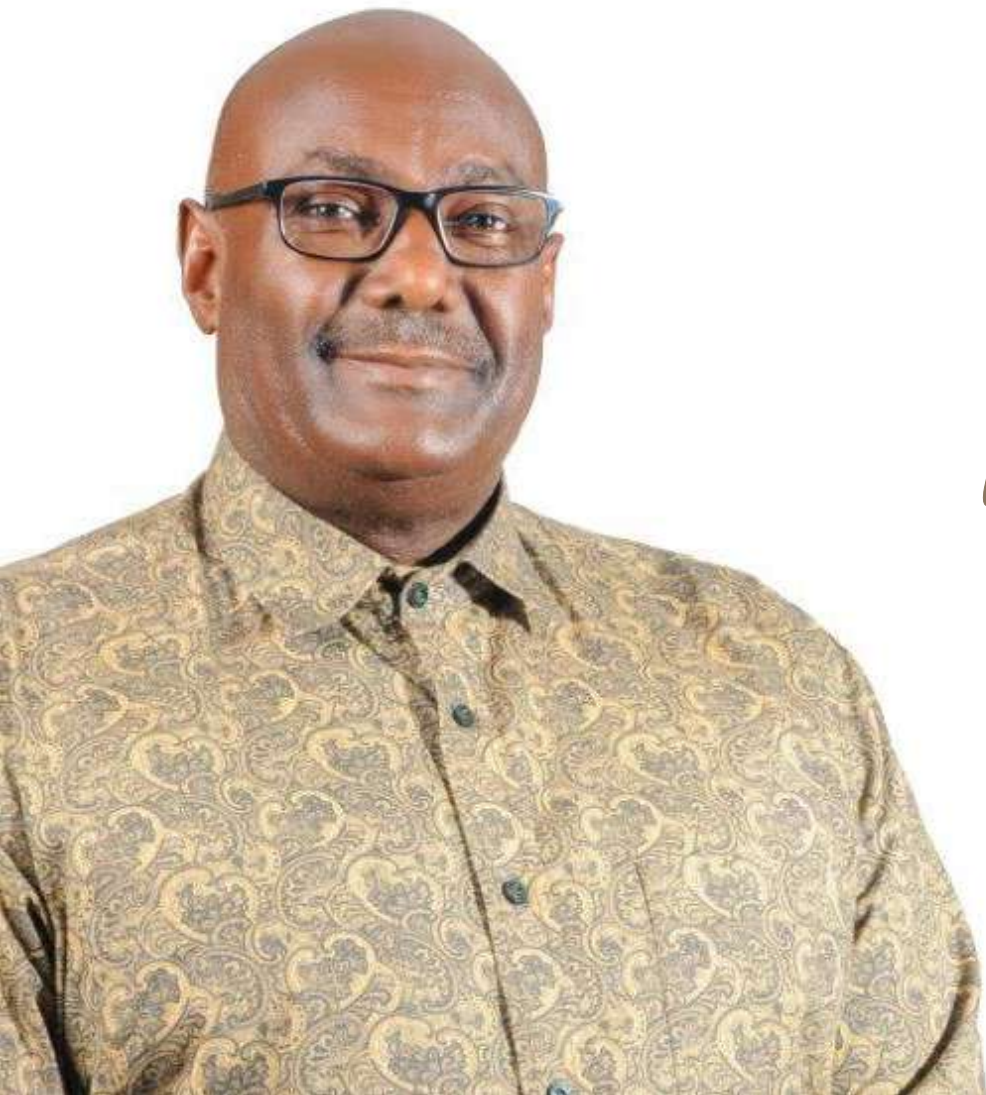


Follow us on our social media platforms:



#WeAreSMU  
[www.smu.ac.za](http://www.smu.ac.za)

VISION:  
*Transforming health services  
through excellence and innovation.*



# Message from the Vice-Chancellor

As the Vice-Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) as our new cohort of students for the 2024 Academic year. I also want to congratulate you for passing Grade 12 after many years of study and the difficult challenges you faced on your academic journey. Your arrival at SMU signifies a great milestone in your journey as young adults and we promise to take care of you and make sure that we help you fulfill your dreams.

You are joining a University with a rich history and legacy. Starting from its predecessor universities, the Medical University of Southern Africa (Medunsa) and the University of Limpopo, SMU is known to have produced men and women who are now playing prominent roles in the health and other sectors, both, locally and internationally.

As a University, we are in a process to take SMU to greater heights. Guided by the University's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan which serves as our roadmap towards the attainment of our objectives, we are poised to make SMU a globally competitive and locally relevant institution as measured by excellence in teaching and learning, vibrant impactful research and innovation, post-graduate training and excellence in core support activities including ICT, communications and infrastructure development.

To this end, the University has made significant progress in the rollout of massive infrastructure projects to cater for the needs of the students. These projects include the development of a 2000 bed residence facility which will go a long way in addressing accommodation challenges that we had to endure for many years.

We have also invested, heavily, in the overhaul of our Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure network. It is envisaged that this will adequately respond to the requirements and aspirations of our students. I appeal to you as new students to, collaboratively, work with us to achieve your dream. Please note that the University has put in place many support services and structures for your utilization and benefit. Make use of all the resources to ensure that your life as a student is as seamless as possible.

As you begin a new chapter in your lives accompanied by some degree of freedom and independence, I plead with you to remain focused on your ultimate goal at SMU-to complete your studies and not be diverted by other activities. Yes, you are going to meet new people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. You, therefore, have a responsibility to exercise discipline in the process and use your newly found freedom in a sensible manner. Your families are making huge sacrifices for you to be here and they are looking forward to you to make them proud!

Student life without extracurricular activities will, surely, be very lackluster. As such, SMU provides a plethora of activities in sports and arts. Join these activities and discover your other talents and meet new friends.

The security of our staff and students is very important. As such, we have made investments in security measures to ensure that your teaching and learning activities continue without any disruptions and that the University infrastructure is safeguarded. Report any suspicious activities to the security department and utilize the student services provided if you experience anything that makes you uncomfortable.

I take this opportunity to welcome you to SMU and hope you have a fulfilling and productive stay with us.



**09**  
2024

MAY

OPEN

DAY


TIME: 08H00 - 16H00 | VENUE: SMU SPORTS COMPLEX

Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners studying Pure Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Science, English and any additional Subjects are invited. All learners must wear full school uniform on the day.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**  
Babalwa Luphondo - babalwa.luphondo@smu.ac.za

10Years of Academic Excellence





**EDITORIAL TEAM**

<p><b>Editor in Chief</b> Dr Lusani Rabelani Netshitomboni</p>	<p><b>Designer</b> Dineo Motshegare</p> <p><b>Writer</b> Tumelo Moila</p>	<p><b>Writer</b> Relebogile Mabusela</p> <p><b>Writer</b> Tsiroleldzo Mandane</p>
<p><b>Additional Photos</b> Edinah Ndlovu</p>		

**TO ADVERTISE CONTACT:**

Editor in Chief: Dr Lusani Rabelani Netshitomboni | E-mail: netshitomboni@smu.ac.za  
Tel: +27 (0) 12 521 5057/5059/5062 | Address: PO Box 60 | Medunsa 0204

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



# SMU Hosted an Induction Workshop for Members of ISGS

The Department of Student Affairs held a three-day induction workshop for the Interim Student Governance Structure (ISGS) 2023/2024. The Induction was aimed at acquainting the ISGS with the principles for effective student leadership, institutional governance, and introduction to various University stakeholders. The role of the ISGS is to advocate for student interests and to stand for such interests at various institutional committees and forums.

**M**r Themba Khumalo officially welcomed the new members of the ISGS 2023/2024. His address was mainly focused on setting the standard, purpose outline and expected induction output. He urged ISGS members to promote and defend the principles of democracy, transparency, and accountability. "My responsibility is to see that there is transparency, democracy, and accountability from all parties," said Mr Khumalo.

He further highlighted the fact that the SRC Constitution provides the norms and standards by which the ISGS must conduct its affairs. In addition, he emphasised that the transformational role and mandate of the ISGS in the University and its members are expected to be transformational agents in society.

The ISGS induction workshop was a three-day event which was scheduled from 26 - 28 January 2024. Each day of the programme produced different outcomes. The outcome of Day One's programme was to provide the ISGS comprehensive understanding of the policies and procedures that underpin governance at the University and to foster effective communication and professionalism between the ISGS and Managements.

Mr Tshepo Mofokeng, Director of Internal Auditing focused his address on the role of Internal Auditing in risk management and institutional governance, Ms. Lorato Molubi outlined a critical skill in student governance that enhances the SMU brand. Closing the presentations for the day was Ms Velencia Maupye, Manager of the Gender-Based Violence Office.

Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele, the Registrar, in his address, explained the role of universities in society and why student representation matters. He further urged the ISGS members to familiarize themselves with the policies and rules of the university and to ensure that they know the academic rules of the university blindfolded. Furthermore, they must engage factually and respectfully in a persuasive manner and that they must prepare adequately for the meetings through all the matters being considered. He urged them to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, citing applicable

rules, especially when they make representations. "Understand that you are a humble servant of the students, your role is to serve them without fear or favour, often to the detriment of your self-interests," Dr Mabelebele advised.

"The Constitution is the key, and you must find time to go through it and ensure that you can encode some of your arguments in the context of the Constitution. Secondly, the Constitution enjoins all of us, to ensure that we build a democratic and open society in which any government that is formed, will be based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law. If there are violations and breaches in terms of the rights of students and so on, some of them can be constitutionally driven. You must be able to use the Constitution to represent students in that regard.

The reason you are here, representing students, among other things, is to ensure that they can flourish in their various academic programs, and complete their academic programs on time so that they can go and work. There is a need for us to advance democratic values to ensure that even if the ISGS is largely constituted by females, all voices in the structure should be heard, and before decisions are made, all views must be expressed."

In his address, Mr Isaac Komape from the Security Services Department focused his presentation on ensuring student safety through crime prevention, investigation, and surveillance at SMU. He further urged new members of the ISGS to respect the rights and responsibilities of all people involved with the university and its activities. "As young adults, you now have the task of leading fellow students, negotiating and



liaising with management on issues that affect them, ensuring that university rules and regulations are adhered to while having to find time to study and make a success of your study. As Security Services, our mandate is to support you to accomplish these mammoth tasks," said Mr Komape.

Day two and three programmes were comprised of constitutional roles of the ISGS office, team building, conflict resolution and programme of action. The ISGS members were taken through a process of strategic planning by the external facilitator, Mr Terra Yako to enable them to identify and implement projects during their term of office.

ISGS Chairperson Karabo Diago expressed his gratitude with regard to how the induction was managed, indicating that was fascinating and insightful. "It was an impactful time of learning and understanding how policies and managerial work are conducted. The induction was more of an activation of a professional self-guided by the framework of policies. It presented an opportunity for us as leaders to find ourselves within the framework of professionalism. I am delighted to have been graced with such an exposure that contributes vastly to good leadership skills," Karabo explained.

In conclusion, the programme was not only aimed at helping student leaders to evolve, develop and grow as leaders but also empowering them with the leadership skills necessary for identifying and mitigating challenges both within and outside the team.



# Message

## from the Interim Student Governance Structure (ISGS)



On behalf of the Interim Student Governance Structure (ISGS), allow me to welcome you all to the Farm, as you embark on the struggle to secure your future. It is indeed my greatest honour to introduce you to Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). This is a place of diversity, which gives all the students a sense of belonging. You can call it, My home, your home, our home.

Just like how a typical farm harbours different types of creatures, so does SMU. The university welcomes people from all races, gender, and belief systems. This is what makes us a Community, the Farm. As you start your academic life at SMU, it is important that you prioritise your academic pursuits whilst enjoying the diverse opportunities that SMU provides. Academics are the main objective of your life at SMU. As such, it is important for you to note that the university has different Schools with support systems aimed at ensuring your overall success. You will also be encouraged to note that SMU has many high-profile academics committed to ensuring that you receive the best teaching and learning experience.

I would also like you to note that whilst it is important for you to focus on your academic pursuits, don't forget to participate in sports, religious activities, and student activism. These are important elements which play a significant role in your well-being, and ultimately, your academic success.

The following are some of the structures that we have on campus: Student Congress, Student Command Youth league, Passo and the Student Christian Fellowship. Although these are different organisations, they all seek to stand and represent you, the SMU students.

I would like you to remember that your parents and relatives have played a significant role in your education thus far. They have high expectations from you. Please act responsibly and make them proud.

“Finally, As Malcolm X once asserted, Education secures one a passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today”

# The Department of Physiotherapy motivates FTENs during Prize-Giving Ceremony



As the University was welcoming its First Time Entering students (FTENs), the Department of Physiotherapy also rewarded its top-performing students during the prize-giving ceremony for the 2023 academic year. The Physiotherapy students went to the university's bus terminal singing in excitement to pick up the FTENs and accompanied them to the ceremony.

During his welcoming address, the Acting Head of the Department Dr Muziwakhe Tshabalala informed the FTENs that they are now part of a caring profession. He said that the one thing about physiotherapists is that they do a lot of things with their hands and the way they touch people gives them the healing that they need.

"We touch people in many ways, not only with our hands but with how we conduct ourselves. This is extremely important because the way we conduct ourselves has a major effect on many people's lives. When you are given work to do, it is expected of you to deliver without excuses. If you are faced with challenges, we will be here to help you because we only have one thing at heart and that is to see you succeed," said Dr Tshabalala.

Physiotherapy Lecturer Dr Rethabile Nkuna introduced the department's academic and support staff that the FTENs will engage with throughout their academic journey. As part of the programme, a prize-giving session was held to reward top-performing students for the 2023 academic year. The students were awarded in the following categories: Best 1st-year Student 2023, Best Second-year Student in Principles of Physiotherapy 2023, Best Third year Applied Physiotherapy 2023 and Outstanding Performance amongst others.

Physiotherapy fourth-year class representative Lance Chiloane advised the FTENs that in their line of work nothing is easy, but at the same time it is the reason the rewards are worth it. He said that as a student, you will find yourself searching and sometimes feel lost, discouraged, and disorganized along the way. He emphasized that this is all part of one's development as a person, professional and scholar. "My advice to the first year students is to always do what is best for themselves and know what they need to achieve, when and why. If you experience any difficulties with your course, recognize the need for help and do not be afraid to ask for assistance. Be the best you can be throughout your new journey, and I can assure you that physiotherapy is the best field to have chosen," concluded Lance.

The FTENs were given souvenirs as a token of appreciation for choosing to study the Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy at SMU.

# The School of Science & Technology (SST) assists FTENS with transition from Secondary to Tertiary Education

The School of Science and Technology (SST) hosted its First Time Entering Students (FTENS) Orientation Programme (OP), which provided a comprehensive and engaging introduction of new students to university life, equipping them with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate and thrive in their academic journey.

Approximately 420 FTENS attended the OP at the SMU Sports Complex on Friday, 9 February 2024. This programme is held annually, before the FTENS commence with their academic programme. It exposed new students to campus life and a wide range of academic development and support services at SMU. Students were engaged in different activities which included open discussion, including the welcome addresses by the Dean, Professor Lawrence Obi, HODs, and lecturers.

Prof Obi, in his address, officially welcomed and congratulated the FTENS for being admitted to study at SMU. He urged students to respect themselves and their lecturers.

“These lecturers you see here are parents. They are mothers and fathers, and they have also achieved in their respective endeavours. Please respect them. We will also respect you. When you respect the lecturers, we will reciprocate that respect. If there are some issues that you have, you do not just need to run to the office of the Dean as there are processes to be followed within the university and the school. You have class representatives; and you can go to the lecturer concerned. If you cannot resolve it with the lecturer, you can go to the HOD. If the HOD cannot resolve it, then they can escalate it to the Dean,” advised Prof Obi.

Take your faith and destiny into your hands. Nobody will come and tell you to wake up or to go to classes or to study. You have to make sure that you manage your time well, know when to study and know when to play. Know the type of friends you keep. If your friends are always telling you, let us go to town for parties, let us go to town to drink, please think twice. You should cultivate friendships with those who will encourage you to study and want you to succeed.”

The chairperson of the Interim Student Governance Structure (ISGS), Karabo Diago in his welcoming address stated that the role of the ISGS is to advocate for the student interest and ensure their wellness within the university. “You were not just chosen; you must take pride in that you were chosen on merit. You were chosen based on the capacity that you have shown. You are capable young people who can then grow and be leaders and serve in different professions in the country. As I welcome you, I wish you all the best on your academic journey. Welcome to SMU, which is proudly known as the Farm because this is where diversity is natured,” Diago concluded.

One of the FTENS indicated that the OP smoothly assisted her to transit from secondary to tertiary education. Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Life Sciences first-year student, Salome Mosima shared her experience about the OP indicating that the programme was very interesting and informative. “Throughout the programme, I have learnt about various student societies and sports clubs available at SMU. The heads of the departments were introduced to us, including lecturers and all the departments which fall under our school,” Salome explained.





# SHCS 2024 FTENs Welcoming and Oath-Taking Ceremony

On the 5th of February 2024, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU)'s School of Health Care Sciences (SHCS) hosted its welcoming and oath-taking ceremony for First Time Entering students (FTENs).

SHCS Acting Dean Professor Douglas Maleka gave a warm welcome to the FTENs and introduced them to the School's Operations Manager, Heads of Departments, administrators, and Lecturers from the departments of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Nursing Science, Public Health, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. He informed the FTENs that they are joining a university that has a long history defined by its well-entrenched culture and tradition of academic excellence.

Prof Maleka shared that he was once a Physiotherapy student during the MEDUNSA era, sitting exactly where the FTENs were sitting. He encouraged the FTENs to look at him as a product of this university by compared to where he is today. "I am delighted that you have chosen to study at SMU. To partner with this university as you enter the next phase of your journey for your intellectual growth, self-discovery, and personal development. You have chosen well by applying for degrees within the SHCS which is the third largest school in the university," expressed Prof Maleka.

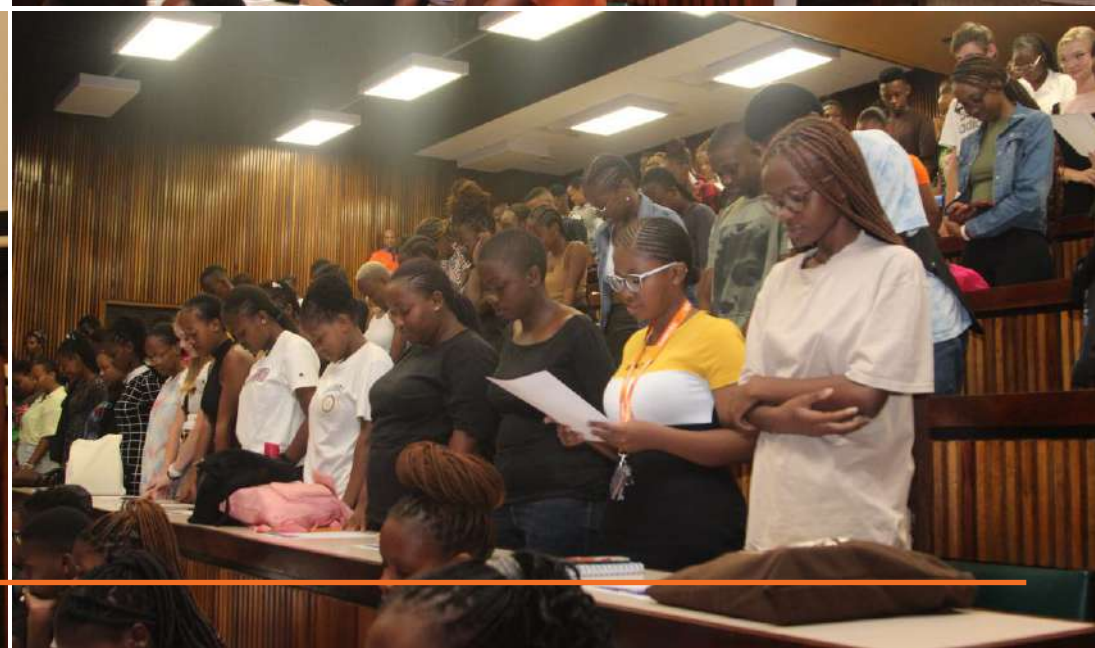
Human Nutrition and Dietetics Lecturer Mrs Caida McDougall spoke about the significance of taking an oath. In her address, she urged the students to, "Pledge themselves to the service of humanity". McDougall shared five key points that highlighted the significance of oath-taking. "Firstly, an oath ensures and establishes ethical principles. Secondly, it fosters professional identity and accountability. Thirdly, it publicly declares a commitment to the profession's ideals and values, thus creating a sense of shared purpose and belonging. Fourthly, it builds patience, trust, and confidence. Lastly, an oath promotes continuous professional development," she stated.

McDougall added that an oath holds professionals accountable to their peers and society, promoting self-regulation and maintaining public trust in the health care system. She explained that an oath guides moral deliberations and that it offers adaptable frameworks necessary to navigate complex ethical dilemmas. She indicated that taking an oath marks a significant transition from being a matriculant to a student health practitioner. She advised the FTENs that an oath serves as a life-long reminder of the core values and commitments they should uphold as future healthcare practitioners.

During her address, the Interim Student Governance Structure (ISGS)'s SHCS Coordinator Ms Keletso Ngoetjana said, "As you embark on this path, remember that you are not just students. You are the future healthcare professionals who will make a significant impact on individuals' lives and the broader community in healthcare science. Embrace the interdisciplinary nature of this field because it is intertwined with biology, physics, and technology to unravel the complexities of the human body. Your journey will be a tapestry of learning, where each thread contributes to the holistic understanding of healthcare. Recognize the privilege of the responsibility that comes with your chosen path".

She further elaborated on the significance of the healthcare profession, indicating that "The healthcare profession is not merely about diagnosing and treating patients. It is about understanding the unique narratives of patients and being a beacon of empathy in times of vulnerability. Embrace collaboration because healthcare is a team sport. Interact with your peers, seek diverse perspectives, and build connections that will not only enrich your academic excellence but also foster a collaborative spirit that is crucial in healthcare settings. In this era of rapid advancement, be adaptable learners as this is the landscape of healthcare that is ever evolving and your ability to embrace the challenge will define your success", she elaborated.

In his closing remarks, Prof Maleka, and the Nursing Science Lecturer Mr Kagiso Tukisi led the oath-taking that was read out by the FTENs.





# School of Dentistry FTENs Embarks on First-Year Experience Programme



auspicious school and hospital. We are also hoping that soon we will also be training dental assistants,” shares the Acting Dean.

“We pride ourselves in that our training is firmly and deeply rooted in innovative teaching approaches, research, and community engagement. You are lucky to be in a School that is within the community where we provide training. We do not only promote excellence, but we would like to think that we are a value-based School. Hopefully, you will be part of the culture in the school where we strive to promote ubuntu, integrity, effective leadership, and accountability. Remember that you have a responsibility because accountability is big in the School,” explains Prof Mawela.

N'tsakisi Mathebula, the Dental Students Council (DSC) Chairperson welcomed all the FTENs and shared her gratitude pointing out that being admitted at SMU is a feat worthy of applause. “For many of you, it is the first time you are in this hall, and I want you to look around and take in as much as you can; from the many fresh faces to the distinct sounds and smells. Soon you will be back here taking your oath at the end of your academic journey; and it will all feel surreal. You are going to be a completely new person, the stranger next to you now might be a friend and these walls will echo the sounds of the ending of an arduous journey and the beginning of a whole new one with challenges. Each of your lecturers, mentors and tutors are going to try their best to make sure that you are well-equipped to excel. If you need anything, please feel free to look for me or my colleagues in the DSC office for direction or guidance in any way and we will try our best to help.”

One of the Dentists in the School Dr Grace Phalwane, popularly known as MamaG motivated the FTENs. “If I can take an axe and try to break the rock, my axe is going to be destroyed, but if I take an axe and try to cut a tree, that tree will be destroyed but the same tree can crack through the big rock. Have you ever asked yourself? Why is this plant called a sunflower? Being denied of what sustains your life and asking no one to help you but do it yourself. Look at those plants. They are all moving towards the light. They all want some light because with the light they know they are going to create chlorophyll. Some nutrients will be sustained and by that, they will self-preserve and perpetuate their species.

“The environment has no power over you, otherwise some of us would be long dead. As human beings, we are the ones who create the environment. You should be stubborn to make it against the odds, look for that light, look for that sunshine. We are capable of phototherapy as a human beings, remember the song by La Visa-free something in so it is so strong, it doesn't matter what happens, but you have got something inside you that is so strong that is going to make you completely this degree and go serve the communi-ties. Nature is inciting you to crack through those rocks and do not stop until you see your light like the trees.”

Buhlebezwa Mlotshwa, a Bachelor of Oral Hygiene student said that SMU is his university of choice and that it is the best in the country. Furthermore, he is convinced that SMU is one of the most uniquely specialized health sciences universities globally.

**T**he School of Dentistry held its First Year Experience Programme (FYEP) for First Time Entering Students (FTENs) on Monday, 5 February 2024. The FYEP is held, annually, at the beginning of the academic year to familiarize the FTENs with the numerous services and resources available to fulfil their academic obligations.

In her keynote address, the Acting Dean of the School, Professor Dini Mawela officially welcomed the FTENs and gave a brief historical perspective on the genesis of the School, which has been in existence since the early 70s. The School of Dentistry provides training in three undergraduate programmes, namely, Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS), Bachelor of Dental Therapy (BDT), and Bachelor of Oral Hygiene (BOH). “We are the only school in the entire South Africa that trains undergraduate students in all three programmes at the same time. You must consider yourselves as one of the few special students and it is an honour and a privilege to have you in this



# BDS Students take Hippocratic Oath to uphold their Care for Patients

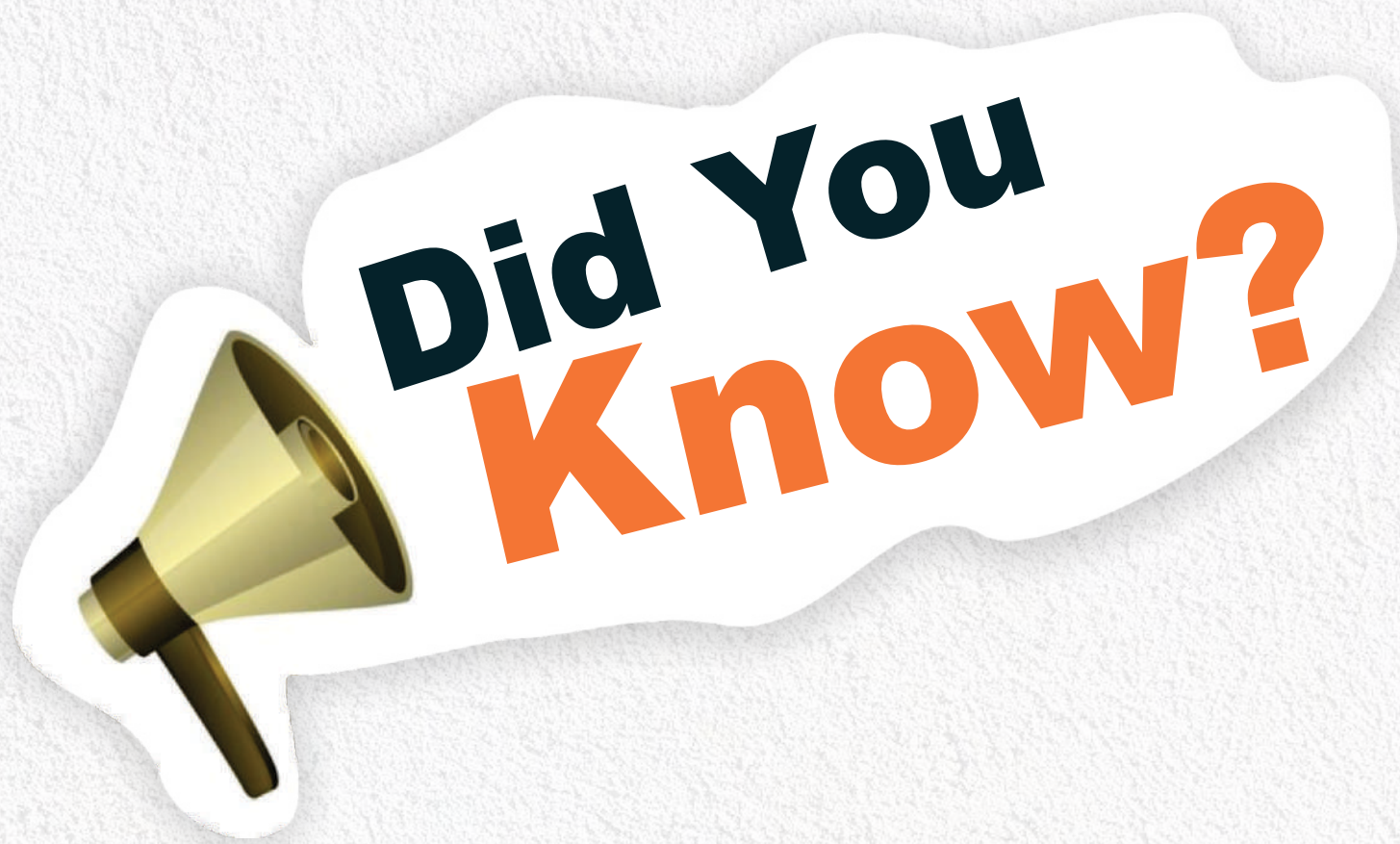
The School of Dentistry (SoD) held its white coat ceremony on the 19th of January 2024, to mark the official commencement of the academic year for the final year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students. The students recited the Hippocratic Oath to signify their commitment to upholding the highest standards of care for patients.

The Acting Head of the Department of Integrated Clinical Dentistry Dr Kebiditswe Masike indicated that academic excellence in the SoD means aligning themselves with the values of their School and the University. She also noted that the School embraces ubuntu, integrity, accountability, respect for one another, servanthood, being good stewards of resources, and being competent healthcare providers.

"As you take this oath and sign the declarations today in your white clinical coats, you are committing that you will live by these values. The signed declarations will be mounted in your clinical area so that you can be reminded of the pledge throughout the year," Dr Masike said during her address.

Fifth-year BDS student Zwivhuya Muntswu is one of the 40 students in the Class of 2024. She expressed her gratitude, pointing out that the oath-taking and white coat ceremony had so far exceeded her expectations. "We have been orientated and initiated into the journey of the Dentistry profession, and taking this oath signified our commitment to patient care which began on day one of our studies. I can boldly say that the Class of 2024 is sold to the perspective of comprehensive care for every patient that comes our way. As we look forward to transitioning from our white coats to black gowns that await us at the end of the year, we intend on reaching the finishing line of our undergraduate programme," says Zwivhuya.





## SMU turns 10 Years.

Celebrations will be on the 17 May 2024.

*Save the Date...*

Watch out for further announcements!

# 10 Years of Academic Excellence

Follow us:       | [www.smu.ac.za](http://www.smu.ac.za)

SEFAKO MAKGATHO  
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

