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RESTRUCTURED FOR RELEVANCE

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR UNIZULU IN 2018



Professor Xoliswa Mtose, UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor, during the 2018 UNIZULU Official Opening event.

The full implementation of the university's transformation plan, commencement of infrastructure projects as well as the review of academic programmes will top this year's strategic agenda for the University of Zululand.

Speaking at the recent UNIZULU Official Opening event, Professor Xoliswa Mtose, UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor, said the University is embarking on a year of "great expectations".

"The University is now back on track with infrastructure projects that were aborted in 2012 and 2013. This year, we hope to see dust through new buildings and infrastructure that meet the needs of our students and lead the University into the future. The existing buildings, particularly our student residences, need to be refurbished to acceptable standards. It is in our cards that we need to start somewhere," she said. Prof Mtose added that a concept has been proposed to convert the old Vice-Chancellor's house located on the main KwaDlangezwa Campus into a new facility which will house several centres such as Teaching and Learning;

Research and Development; Diversity and Social Cohesion; Community Engagement; Graduate Training and Entrepreneurship; Work Integrated Learning as well as Advancement and Grants Management in a bid to augment the business of teaching and learning at the institution.

"We also look forward to the full implementation of the (University's) transformation plan. It's in our cards this year. We must look on transformation. We are also on a journey towards accreditation. We are working with our LLB programme so that it is fully accredited. You will remember that we received a notice of withdrawal and not a withdrawal. We are working on an improvement plan as advised by the Council on Higher Education. This year, students in our LLB programme therefore continued to be registered because we have not been withdrawn from accreditation," said Prof Mtose.

This year, a total of 3879 first-time entering students were registered at the University of Zululand. To ensure that the registration process is more efficient, all postgraduate

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UNIVERSITY OF  
ZULULAND



Towards a Community Engagement Centred University



UNIZULU Researcher Scoops Top Award at International Conference



Dr Ntuthuko Masikane: UNIZULU Alumnus Turned Employee



UNIZULU Appoints Two Executive Directors



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and first-year students as well as those in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture registered via online registrations. Some second and third-year students also registered via this platform. I'm glad to announce that the progress to full online registrations will continue as set out in phase three of online registrations at the University of Zululand. The 2018 registration plan required significant planning to address deficiencies identified in the past. I want to thank the Registrar and his team for the excellent work that they have done in this area. The University is on a positive trajectory and everything should be done to remain steadfast in

compliance and implementation of the rules," she said.

Prof Mtose urged staff and students to always remember that teaching and learning- which includes research- remains at the centre of the University's activities. "Teaching and learning can never be shifted to any agenda. It is our agenda as a University. I cannot overemphasise how important your (staff) role is in ensuring that our students succeed. UNIZULU goals and aspirations can and will be achieved if we approach them in a positive spirit," said Prof Mtose.

– Sinegugu Ndlovu

## TOWARDS A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTRED UNIVERSITY

The year 2018 is set to be characterised by a roll-out of community engagement strategies and activities to guide all community engagement programmes implemented by the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), said the University's newly appointed Community Engagement Manager, Mammusa Lekoa.

Lekoa, who assumed her position in October 2017, is currently drafting the Community Engagement Policy Framework for the University while also working towards developing an inclusive institutional community engagement committee (which comprises representatives from the four faculties, departments and centres that have a footprint in communities).

She explained that as a start, the community engagement strategic focus will entail the office embarking on a University-wide drive to capacitate UNIZULU staff and students on the Community Entry Module which educates students and staff about community engagement whilst training them on proper conduct when entering and conducting research in various communities.

"When the University community goes out of the institution, it should understand that it represents the University and should uphold its values and principles of UNIZULU," Lekoa elaborated.

The Community Entry Module has, so far, only been presented to postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education. The presentation took place in November 2017 during a workshop the Faculty had organised for the students.



Mammusa Lekoa, Community Engagement Manager

Among the plans of the Community Engagement office is the establishment of a "Science Café", a platform on which UNIZULU experts will have dialogue and engage with local communities on matters of science and dissemination of research findings from published work.

"We want to develop the scholarship of community engagement through integrating it into teaching and learning as well as research. What happens in class has to be informed by what is happening in society. In this way, we will fulfil what we state in the University's tag line: restructured for relevance," said Lekoa.

Also among activities to look for is a fun run event aimed at igniting engagement between staff, students, stakeholders and the KwaDlangezwa community through fun and games. This event will enable UNIZULU staff to engage and forge a relationship with local people.

– Naledi Hlefane

## EDITOR'S NOTE

With my manager, Ms Gcina Nhleko: CMD Director, being away for a couple of months, this is my first letter to you as Ongoye Online Editor. I am honoured to be entrusted with managing a flagship publication that has done great work in showcasing successes and achievements within the University for many years as well as catering to the information needs of staff and students alike.

You will immediately notice that the look and feel of the publication has received a facelift. I hope you like the new look which was inspired by our brand identity as the University of Zululand. After several years of existence, we felt that 2018 was the right time to refresh the design of the publication.

We are excited to be hosting this year's Beyers Naude Memorial Lecture- the main event set for 27 March 2018- in which former SA Public Protector, Professor Thuli Madonsela, will deliver the keynote address. Themed: The Evil in our midst: Women and child abuse in present South Africa, we are honoured to be associated with someone of Prof Masonsela's stature and look forward to meaningful engagement- with other important stakeholders as well- around issues which will be covered by the topic of the day.

Ongoye Online is also filled with other positive stories about UNIZULU, so do enjoy reading the publication.

While we are well into the year 2018, this being my first address as Ongoye Online's Editor, I would none-the-less like to wish you a safe, happy, prosperous and productive year. I hope you learn from the experiences of 2017 and use them to propel you to further heights in 2018.

Happy reading,  
**Sinegugu Ndlovu**  
*Acting Director: Communications and Marketing*

## UNIZULU RESEARCHER SCOOPS TOP AWARD AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Dr Neil Evans receiving his award from Susan Stevenson, Chair of the International Higher Education Curriculum Design and Academic Leadership Symposia.

The Head of the Department of Information Studies at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), Dr Neil Evans, has placed the University on the global map after scooping the highly-coveted Best Curriculum and Academic Leadership Paper Award at the 3rd International Higher Education Curriculum Design and Academic Leadership Symposia.

The two-day conference, held in Hamilton, New Zealand in December 2017, is an inclusive platform where educational researchers, leaders and activists display a broad range of posters, conduct presentations and participate in interactive workshops, all revolving around higher education leadership, curriculum design, learning, assessment and evaluation.

The winning paper, titled *Investigating the use of Moodle in blended Higher Education through action research*, was a collaborative project with Professor Shana Poneis who was a visiting lecturer in Dr Evans' department last year (2017).

Giving an overview of his research topic, Dr Evans explained that the paper introduced the concept of globalisation within higher education which was largely brought about by the adoption of digital information and communication models connected through the Internet to a global mass audience.

"Institutions of higher education constantly have to evaluate their teaching and learning policies to accommodate new pedagogies and educational technologies. The paper draws conceptually from the pedagogy of connectivism, in which language together with technology and media act as conduits of information, promoting greater student participation, collaboration and interaction between networked learners, who socially construct an active learning experience within a blended learning ecology. The main aim of the study is to explore the use of blended teaching and learning in higher education by collecting and sharing information around using Moodle learning management system (LMS) through action research," Dr Evans added.

The preliminary findings of the paper reveal that although there is extensive use of Moodle by both staff and students, institutional support and training will make the LMS easier and more widely used by academic and support staff. The findings will assist academic developers and policy makers in improving the quality of blended teaching and learning at UNIZULU.

– Precious Shamase

## DR NTUTHUKO MASIKANE: UNIZULU ALUMNUS TURNED EMPLOYEE



Dr Ntuthuko Masikane, newly appointed lecturer in the Department of Zoology.

The proverb "there is no place like home" could not better describe the story of Dr Ntuthuko Masikane, an alumnus of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) who was recently employed as a lecturer in the institution's Department of Zoology. Dr Masikane obtained his Bachelor of Science (BSc), BSc Honours and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Zoology from UNIZULU. The seasoned researcher and alumnus is proud to serve the university that both shaped him and launched his career. He said, "It feels good to be back home and to work with my mentors such as Prof Leon Vivier, Prof Hendrik Jerling and Mr Hendrick Mzimela. My passion for research stems from observing and learning from them. If it was not for them, I would not have persevered and continued with my master's degree at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (now Nelson Mandela University)."

Dr Masikane has gained his experience from various sectors in his field. He started off as an intern, while pursuing his master's degree, at the then newly established South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON), Elwandle (Coastal Inshore) Node where his role was to monitor and establish a long-term monitoring framework for invertebrate crustaceans that live on the sea floor. Upon completing his master's degree, Dr Masikane enrolled for a DST-NRF Internship Programme and was placed at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Durban. Apart from the invaluable experience and exposure the researcher gained, this work opportunity also inspired his research topic on the development of a biological tool for the assessment of marine and estuarine pollution.

Dr Masikane has also occupied a lecturing position at the University of Fort Hare and a Senior Research Scientist position at CSIR. Throughout the different stages of his career, the academic has always enjoyed interacting with students from different walks of life. He has delivered popular talks at high school science camps, shared on specialised topics at universities and mentored postgraduates and interns.

"There is no greater pleasure than knowing that you have contributed positively to someone's career development. I therefore feel excited and look forward to lecturing and training students in the exciting field of Zoology," Dr Masikane said. His research interests are on marine and estuarine benthic ecology as well as ecological toxicology, particularly on the development of standardised biological methods for determining pollution. During his spare time, Dr Masikane enjoys reading books, cooking and taking long walks along the beach. Other than that, give him a good action movie and he will be "glued" to the TV screen.

– Precious Shamase

## UNIZULU APPOINTS TWO EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



Ms Tsilidzi Ramanyimi, Executive Director: Infrastructure.



Mr Pieter du Plessis Executive Director: Institutional Support.

As a means of successfully implementing its institutional support and infrastructural goals in 2018, the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) has recently appointed two executive directors to head up the Infrastructure and Institutional Support portfolios.

Ms Tsilidzi Ramanyimi, Executive Director: Infrastructure, and Mr Pieter du Plessis Executive Director: Institutional Support, assumed their roles on 1 February 2018.

Ms Ramanyimi has a Diploma in Building Management from Peninsula Technikon, a B-Tech Degree in Quantity Surveying from Technikon Natal (now known as the Durban University of Technology) as well as a Master's degree in Engineering Science from the University of Pretoria. She is currently studying towards her Master's degree in Technology Management with the University of Pretoria.

She has vast work experience in both the private and public sectors. Among the entities she has worked for is the National Port Authority, Department of Public Works, Peninsula Technikon as well as the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Her areas of expertise include building management, maintenance and facilities management as well as property management.

Mr du Plessis is a qualified Chartered Accountant CA (SA) with a BCom and honours degree in accounting from the University of

the Free State (UFS). He began his career as an auditor, gaining experience in the areas of tax, audit, finance and business.

He thereafter occupied the Director position in the Finance Department at UFS for a number of years where he gained exposure into and understanding of the higher education environment. In the past three and a half years, he played a pivotal role in leading departments which fall under the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Operations at UFS.

In his role at UNIZULU, Mr du Plessis will be managing the Protective Services Department, Communications and Marketing Division, Supply Chain Management, Student Services Department and Information Communications Technology.

Mr du Plessis has many accolades which include being involved in various national projects in the higher education sector such as the calculation of a Higher Education Price Index as well as a benchmarking exercise where he formulated early warning signs of a university in financial distress. He was also part of a task team which developed the full cost model with the implementation by universities of the Intellectual Property Act.

UNIZULU extends a hearty welcome to Ms Ramanyimi and Mr du Plessis and awaits, with great anticipation, the immense contributions of the directors to the institution.

– Naledi Hlelane