



**ONGOYE
ONLINE**

May 2019 | Issue No. 6

RESTRUCTURED FOR RELEVANCE

UNIZULU HOSTS IMPACTFUL DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Attendees at the University Zululand Colloquium.

On Monday, 6 May 2019, the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) branch of the South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF) held its second Dialogue and Research Seminar at the University's Science Centre in Richards Bay.

The seminar was aimed at discussing and finding solutions to issues concerning environmental sustainability among other topics.

SASUF is a four-year strategic internationalisation project which UNIZULU is involved in. It began in 2017 and will run until 2020. Its overall objective is strengthening ties between Sweden and South Africa in research, education and innovation. The forum is a collaboration between 36 universities in Sweden and South Africa, together with embassies, civil society organisations, funding agencies and ministries in both countries.

The colloquium, which was titled "Siphila Kanje", came at a convenient period where South Africa had experienced challenges of

climate change which led to the destruction of many households in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

According to Professor Unathi Kolanisi, the Acting Deputy Dean; Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture who is also a member of the organising team of the seminar, the title "Siphila Kanje", which translates to "This is how we live", was specifically chosen to raise awareness about how people are treating the environment.

"Through the name, we are trying to share the way in which we are living, (in terms of) challenges and experiences," said Prof Kolanisi.

UNIZULU Community Engagement Manager Mammusa Lekoa, who is also part of the organising team, said the event was a relevant tool for addressing the environmental issues currently facing the country. With members of society such as traditional practitioners also in attendance at the event, Lekoa said engaging with

continued on page 2



**UNIVERSITY OF
ZULULAND**



Communication Science Academics Fly UNIZULU Flag High in Malaysia



Academic's Study on Graduate Attributes Reveals Important Facts



OPINION PIECE: Religion as a Double-Edged Sword: Practice and Belief in Miracles in Democratic South Africa



What are the Advantages of Living in a Democratic Era?

continued from page 1

such individuals was imperative since their practice is directly affected by climate change.

"The traditional healers needed to understand how climate change affects their practice in terms of the plantation of herbs. For example, look at the drought. Drought has a negative impact in their herbs growing. However, these engagements also allow us (as the University) to understand their knowledge. It's not about us determining what they should know, this is for us to listen too," she said.

Speaking on behalf of the attendees at the event, Makhosi-weDlozelihle Buthelezi from Nongoma said, they felt honoured to have been invited by the University. Adding that they deemed the event as a huge step for the country and the world at large, towards resolving the issue of climate change.

The seminar was a build up to the main SASUF Research and Innovation Seminar which took place at the Stellenbosch University from 8 to 10 May.

– Samkele Sokhela

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE ACADEMICS FLY UNIZULU FLAG HIGH IN MALAYSIA



Department of Communication Science staff, along with their international counterparts, during the 5th World Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2019, held recently in Malaysia.

The University of Zululand's (UNIZULU) Department of Communication Science shone at the recent 5th World Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2019 which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

UNIZULU was an academic partner with several institutions namely Dhurakij Pundit University in Thailand; Petra Christian University in Indonesia; Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. The conference was co-hosted together with Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia; University of Rome Tor Vergata and Xiamen University, Malaysia.

Representing the Communication Science Department was Dr Kevin Naidoo, who heads the said department, alongside academics Dr Reggy Metso, Dr Mike Reddy, Nthabiseng Makhutla and Prof Hemduth Rugbeer and Dr Yasmin Rugbeer, Director: Teaching and Learning.

Dr Naidoo said attending the conference was an educational experience. "We were greatly enriched by the diverse international participants and the high level of research

that was presented," he said.

The academics presented and shared learnings derived from research and best modelled practices which was well received by their international peers. Dr Naidoo, who presented on Using Social Media: Innovative Teaching and Learning Tool in Public Schools, was awarded for the best session presentation at the conference. The UNIZULU group also got the opportunity to publish in SCOPUS indexed journals, serve both in the conference Scientific Committee and evaluation panel.

Through participating in the conference, the UNIZULU team helped promote the university and the Communication Science Department on an international platform. The experience has also resulted in the forging of networks and collaborations for future individual and combined research including partnering with Universiti Teknologi Mara, the largest university in Malaysia.

– Gcina Nhleko-Mdluli

EDITOR'S NOTE

The annual Graduation Ceremonies are also almost upon us. The ceremonies will see thousands of graduands descend the graduation stage as they, and the University by extension, celebrate the fruit of their labour. The ceremonies are scheduled to take place from Monday, 13 May until Friday, 17 May at the majestic King Bhekuzulu Hall.



Gcina Nhleko
Director: Communications and Marketing

The 5th election since 1994 is also upon us South Africans. With the country's 22 924 voting stations set to open for special voting and election day, the Electoral Commission has appealed for a reduction in political activity to allow space for voting to take place peacefully.

Rhetoric has often undermined reasonableness and rationality in the high-stakes contest for political power. Leaders of political parties, industry and civil society are reminded that our democracy is underpinned by our collective political maturity and our adherence to and promotion of the laws in place to ensure free and fair elections. Therefore let us all make an informed mark in order to punish or reward the promises of politicians for the betterment of our country.

The University of Zululand (UNIZULU) has joined forces with 35 universities in South Africa and Sweden through the South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF). SASUF, among other tasks, connects both local and international universities with funding agencies, industries and ministries working towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. This is one of unique projects where higher learning institutions work with the global community to ensure that the well-being of all humankind is improved for the better.

UNIZULU regards itself as an authentically African university and a core part of our institutional mission is to create a sense of identity amongst our staff, students and the public at large and an appreciation of our African history and heritage as lived, interpreted and articulated by Africans themselves. We see this as a process of education and enlightenment, of exposure to additional and alternative narratives and as a process of conscientising this generation and those to come to a history and legacy of which so many are unaware. Essentially, we see ourselves as serving South Africans and Africans towards an African expression of quality higher education that can be benchmarked against the best in the world as outlined in the Strategic Objective Goal 4 which entails "Enhancing the quality and profile of UNIZULU graduates".

So, in the spirit of all that has been mentioned above, join us as UNIZULU, as we celebrate our own greatness and accomplishments. Keep in mind that more is yet to come.

Aluta Continua!

ACADEMIC'S STUDY ON GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES REVEALS IMPORTANT FACTS



Dr Mziwakhe Sibuqashe, Curriculum Development Specialist in the Teaching and Learning Centre, is a newly qualified doctor of philosophy.

The effective integration of graduate attributes into a higher education institution curriculum requires proper involvement of academics on the subject matter and its overall impact on graduates and the reputation of the institution, Dr Mziwakhe Sibuqashe, Curriculum Development Specialist in the Teaching and Learning Centre, suggests.

Dr Sibuqashe, who recently graduated with a PhD in Education at the Nelson Mandela University, has been conducting his doctoral research on the topic of graduate attributes (GAs) since 2014. His research was entitled "The Integration of Graduate Attributes into the Curriculum at Undergraduate Level: A Case of Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT)".

Explaining what is meant by GAs, the academic said: "These are skills that each higher education institution expects its graduates to possess when they leave the institution. They are very important for higher education institutions because they provide them with a little bit of a roadmap of what skills they should focus on."

He elaborated that these attributes can be imparted to students in a lecture room setting or via influences of the university environment. They vary from communication skills to accountability to working within a group or diverse environment. For instance, lecturers can indirectly instil the value of teamwork by setting up a group exercise in their lecture. In this way, students can learn about the dynamics of working within a group and how to deal with these challenges.

In his study, Dr Sibuqashe investigated the extent to which graduate attributes were integrated into the undergraduate curriculum at CUT.

The findings indicated that academics treated graduate attributes as being disengaged from course-specific outcomes without realising the importance of integrating them into the curriculum. The leading cause of this was that academics were not properly informed about what graduate attributes are and their importance in the curriculum.

As a recommendation, Dr Sibuqashe noted that CUT academics (and other institutions, as he predicts this is a challenge in other public institutions of higher education) needed to form part of the development process of graduate attributes. "Their involvement will ensure that other dimensions that might have been missed out are addressed because academics are the ones who have direct contact with students and the subject matter," he added.

On his achievement, Dr Yasmin Rugbeer, Director: Teaching and Learning, said: "Dr Sibuqashe, heartiest congratulations to you on earning your PhD degree. The entire team at the Teaching and Learning Centre congratulates you on such a remarkable success. Finally, all your years of hard work and turmoil have paid off. Good luck for your future projects!"

Dr Sibuqashe said he was grateful to his wife and children for the emotional support they provided during his studies. His supervisor also played a major role in the provision of academic leadership and motivation.

With his research findings, he intends to facilitate the UNIZULU graduate attributes project.

– Naledi Hlefane

OPINION PIECE

RELIGION AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: PRACTICE AND BELIEF IN MIRACLES IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA



Ntsofa Clasper Monyela, Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies.

In a country penetrated by colonialism, industrialisation, urbanisation, capitalism and apartheid like a democratic South Africa, religion is still a double-edged sword. People of South Africa, particularly us classified as blacks, are still in search of remedies for both emotional and spiritual wounds caused through the operations of these projects. The search is then left to us to devise our own means to an end (i.e., you have a freedom of choice). However, this search is not only about healing the wounds, it is also a search of belonging and of identity. Therefore, religion appears to have been found and established as a primary remedy. Unfortunately, in practice, what generally constitutes a religion, appears to be continually manipulated and used to lure and win the hearts of those who, out of their will and right, follow the belief centred around what religion is deemed to be about. In South Africa, it appears that the nature of existence in the practice of a religion is embedded within the empiricism perspective. In this case, one might or must reflect

on the recent developments whereby people were sprayed with insect repellent and promised marriages as well as being made to eat grass, drink petrol and fake resurrection, just to name but a few. These are “miracles” that can be found morally ungrounded and which continue rubbing salt and chillies onto the wounds and scars of past. The doers of such ills must be prosecuted, so that victims can be free from the postmodern slavering system.

Using religion to cut people from both sides, especially during their times of despair, is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. One might decide, if they wish, to revisit the history of the relationship between colonial government and missionaries, especially, administratively. People's beliefs and sufferings are being exploited in the name of “miracle performance”. But perhaps a big question is why all these are happening in South Africa? I argue that religion in a democratic South Africa continues to be dangerous. It violates people. It is a problem of democracy.

– Ntsofa Clasper Monyela

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN A DEMOCRATIC ERA?



"I can now speak and do anything freely. I am free and able to vote for any political party that meets my interests and preferences. Unlike before, everyone now has rights. We longer have to carry identity documents and permits when we go out." – **Sipho Ntuli, UNIZULU Postal Carrier.**



"Women, people of low financial status and those who do not have a "sufficient" level of education are no longer excluded. I advise, that we do not take this democracy for granted because we do not want to end up a country with a voting system that is some sort of dictatorship, like in some countries. Let's positively make use of the democracy." – **Brian Rawlins, Lecturer in the Department of Hydrology.**



"Everybody is now benefiting. We all have equal opportunities now. Our Freedom is very special; I'd urge everyone to look after it and do not allow anyone to take it away from them. We should treasure our freedom; it was a very long and difficult struggle to get to where we are now. People gave their lives for our Freedom." – **Eugene Goosen,**

Deputy Head of Protective Services Department.



"From a woman's perspective, we are now empowered educationally and economically. Women are now invading spaces that were male-dominated before, such as senior positions. We have women now who are CEOs and vice-chancellors and are working hard towards the fulfilment of the many visions and goals of the country." – **Ntombi Khumalo, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education.**



"Now we get to choose any country we want to visit. If it wasn't for democracy, we wouldn't be able to do that. We are also given a chance to choose what we want our future to look like. For example, in a country where you are not free to decide, it is difficult to tailor-make your future. Before democracy, it was very difficult to choose a school but now we are

able to go to any multi-racial school of our choice." – **Dr Makhosazana Vezi-Magigaba, Head of the Department of Business Management.**



"One of the advantages is improved education. You know, my family couldn't afford to send me to a university and even when I got to tertiary, I couldn't do what I wanted to do. Actually, I wanted to (study) medicine, but ended up (studying) medical technology, because with medicine, I had to pay from my own pocket. Now almost everything has changed; we have NSFAS and other bursaries." – **Thembisile Ndimande, Quality Assurance Manager.**



"Everyone has a voice and everyone can be heard. Everyone has a stake in the country because we all can vote now." – **Isabel Rawlins; Lecturer in the Department of English.**



"Everyone is allowed now to do anything of their choice regardless of their race, gender and social background. We now have equity in the country." – **Ashwin Parusnath, Risk and Compliance Director.**

– Samkele Sokhela