

ONGOYE TERTIARY TIMES

UNIZULU takes strides in developing entrepreneurship-focused curriculum

PROF NONTOKOZO MASHIYA AND NALEDI HLEFANE

A RECENT visit by a University of Zululand (UNIZULU) delegation to the Appalachian State University (ASU) in the United States (US) culminated in the draft of an extensive plan to develop and sustain an entrepreneurship-focused curriculum at UNIZULU.

Led by UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor Prof Xoliswa Mtsoe, the delegation included Prof Nontokozo Mashiyi, Director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and the dean of the Faculty of Commerce, Administration, and Law (FCAL) along with the two FCAL deputy deans.

The trip came as a result of a \$100 000 grant (over R1 500 000) UNIZULU recently received from the US Embassy. The three-year funding will be channelled into various projects set to fulfil the University's entrepreneurship education plan.

"In December 2008, the University of Zululand and Appalachian State University signed an institutional agreement to work together in various areas of mutual interest. It was within this context that the UNIZULU delegation visited Appalachian," Prof Mashiyi elaborated.

The purpose of the visit, she said, was to strengthen collaboration and to further the expertise of the staff required to make UNIZULU a truly entrepreneurial university for the benefit of its students, staff and the community that it serves. In addition, the delegation sought advice on and assistance with how to establish an entrepreneurship centre, infuse entrepreneurship into the UNIZULU curriculum and entrench a culture of entrepreneurship in UNIZULU students.

Shedding light on why UNIZULU is shifting its focus to entrepreneurship, Prof Mashiyi said: "The University of Zululand is located in a rural setting. With rurality comes the accompanying three scourges in South Africa, namely, unemployment, poverty and inequality.



UNIZULU is planning to infuse entrepreneurship education into its curriculum. This massive project will be steered by the International Linkages Office together with identified members of the University's four faculties.

Entrepreneurship is seen as a solution for economic growth around the world, and universities are the epicentre of this development as education is linked to the pursuit of opportunity or innovation-driven entrepreneurship, which results in fast growing entities that employ more people and contribute to community growth and development."

At the end of the visit, both parties agreed to implement various action

items over a 12 to 18-month period. Staff at the Appalachian Walker College of Business will share some material for the curriculum development effort at UNIZULU, as the university is planning to infuse entrepreneurship education into the curriculum across all faculties and introduce a university-wide course on entrepreneurship. A team from the business college will also visit UNIZULU to assess the context of entrepreneurship

in KwaZulu-Natal.

Other plans include, among others, organising an entrepreneurship webinar in the first quarter of 2022, involving some ASU faculty staff and students in FCAL's annual flagship MBALI Conference through presentations, and identifying approximately four UNIZULU students who will visit ASU in order to be exposed to entrepreneurial practices and interact with ASU students.

Sweet victory for UNIZULU Choir

NALEDI HLEFANE

THE UNIZULU Choir is a true testament to how beneficial daring to be different can be.

In October, the choristers entered Pepsi South Africa's current #PepsiChangeYourWorld competition and won one of the weekly prizes, owing to their unique entry. They received a R5 000 cash prize along with T-shirts.

To participate, entrants are required to upload short videos on Tik Tok showcasing how Pepsi has changed their world. With scores having already entered in October, the choir knew it had to have a stand-out factor to capture Pepsi's attention.

"Pepsi had a standard song that contestants had to use for entries, but we decided to take a risk and change the song, just to add that personal UNIZULU Choir touch. We came together, composed and arranged the new song before recording it," shared Siphesihle Ndimande, the choir's public relations officer.

For the story element of the entry, the choristers gravitated towards the idea of a stage performance. The video opens with the group just as they are about to perform on stage. They appear drained and nowhere near ready to rock the stage – that is, until they take a few sips of the Pepsi one of their members has provided. Soon after, they are revitalised and render a great performance.

Once the entry was uploaded, Pepsi

sent the choir a message, commending it for the lovely composition and harmonies. The following day, the company posted the video on its Instagram story, seeking public opinion. By the end of that week, the choir received the wonderful news regarding its victory.

"We were so shocked when we heard that we had won, but we were grateful at the same time because we took a chance and it paid off. I believe that this entry showcases our versatility; it shows what we can do outside of the choral music genre," said Minenhle Ndwalande, the deputy chairperson of the choir.

According to choir member Lungile Dladla, the entire experience was a learning curve for her. It revealed the power of teamwork, the importance of respecting the views of others and it taught her that minor disagreements need not deter a group from reaching its goal.

Bhekani Buthelezi, the UNIZULU Choir co-ordinator, is overjoyed with this win. He said: "I feel so proud each time the choir comes up with out-of-the-box ideas for projects we can embark on. We always try to go out of our comfort zone. My joy has come from seeing how they grab opportunities with both hands. I believe that taking risks can only help us grow as a collective. My challenge as their leader is to challenge them even more. I don't want us to get comfortable with celebrating the same achievements. We need to keep surpassing our last accomplishment."



The UNIZULU Choir has added being among the weekly winners of the #PepsiChangeYourWorld competition to their list of victories. The choristers received R5 000 and T-shirts as a prize.

UNIZULU staff member receives esteemed research management award

PRECIOUS SHAMASE

SIYANDA Manqe, the manager of research ethics and postgraduate studies within the University of Zululand's (UNIZULU) Research and Innovation Office, has new-found confidence and more zeal to keep performing optimally after receiving a prestigious national award for his commendable role in research and innovation management.

Manqe was bestowed with the DSI/SARIMA Award for Professional Excellence in Research Management during the recent Department of Science and Innovation/Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (DSI/SARIMA) Excellence in Research and Innovation Management Awards ceremony. The ceremony takes place yearly as part of the annual SARIMA Conference.

SARIMA is an organisation that brings together researchers and innovators, and provides opportunities for research and innovation (R&I) management professionals from southern Africa and beyond to connect, engage, network and share best practices.

To qualify for the Professional Excellence in Research Management Award, a recipient must have served in the research management profession for seven years or more and have made an increasing contribution to their organisations and the R&I management community over that time, nationally. The award winner receives a certificate endorsed by the DSI and signed by the SARIMA President, along with a trophy accompanied by a prize.

On this great achievement, Manqe



said: "This marks a great milestone in my career as my decade of work from all three universities I have operated at has been nationally recognised in the research management stream. This exposes me to possibly more leadership roles and opportunities. I am grateful to God, my mentors and family for the support over the years and take this as the beginning of greatness."

Manqe holds a Bachelors and Honours degree in Information Science from UNIZULU as well as two Certificates in Research Ethics and Integrity from Wits University. He is currently registered for a Master's degree at Rhodes University focusing on higher education. His consistency during the years has seen him enjoy much growth in his career. He worked as

a research assistant in UNIZULU's Faculty of Arts in 2011 before being permanently employed as Administrator: Research Ethics & Integrity in the institution's Research Office in 2012. Five years later, Manqe moved to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Senior Research Office where he occupied the Senior Administrator: Publication position. In 2018, he was appointed as an ethics co-ordinator at Rhodes University up to his return to UNIZULU on October 1, 2021.

Equally thrilled about Manqe's accomplishment is Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, Professor Nokuthula Kunene. She agreed that Manqe's contribution to the research management sector is "applaudable", adding that UNIZULU is glad to have him back again.

Researchers to look "beyond" Covid-19 pandemic during MBALI Conference

NALEDI HLEFANE

THE Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law (FCAL) has its ducks in a row and is eager to host the highly anticipated 2021 MBALI Interdisciplinary Conference.

Taking place from Wednesday, December 1 to Friday, December 3, the conference will be conducted in a blended fashion, with both virtual and live presentations by experienced, emerging researchers from eight countries on the African, Asian and American continents.

Professor Irrshad Kaseeram, Deputy Dean: Research and Internationalisation in FCAL, explained that the event was initially intended for the development of novice staff and postgraduate students in South Africa. However, the call for papers attracted the interest of an even wider international audience. There was an influx of papers from scholars residing in Ghana, Nigeria, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, India and America, but the faculty could only accept 120 papers. What was originally planned as a national event then became an international one – such is the reputation of the MBALI Conference.

Considering the global impact of Covid-19, FCAL chose the theme: "Beyond Covid-19: Rejuvenation, Rebirth, A New World Order". The faculty is particularly eager to learn about how the disruptions caused by the pandemic have affected the commerce, economics, politics, management and law disciplines, as well as what research is currently being conducted in these areas. According to Prof Kaseeram, most papers are in the areas of commerce, education and health-related matters. Other popular sub-themes include entrepreneurship, and local and national government governance challenges. The



THEME: BEYOND COVID 19: REJUVENATION, REBIRTH, A NEW WORLD ORDER

main thrust of the conference is to look beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, to the new dawn that awaits researchers in the areas of commerce, law and administration.

"We have an interesting and varied array of plenary speakers. The conference will be opened by Dr Ziv Chinzara, a young high-achieving Zimbabwean working with the World Bank as a financial and banking analyst based in Washington DC. He will be motivating young researchers about functioning optimally in a digital world.

"Prof Richard Shambare from UWC and Prof Baral from the Uttar Pradesh Tribal University in India will be doing plenary talks on rural and social entrepreneurship, which is a major sub-theme of FCAL's research niche area project," Prof Kaseeram highlighted. He added that there will be more plenary sessions that will be focused on human rights matters and the tools required to be creative and innovative when conceptualising research themes.

Speaking about the intended impact of the conference, Prof Kaseeram said FCAL is hoping for a cross-pollination of ideas between UNIZULU, local and international presenters. "Most importantly, we are hoping to introduce novice faculty staff and postgraduate student researchers into the community of practice and to build their confidence in presenting their research to an international audience," he added.

For Shalen Heeralal, a lecturer in the Department of Business Management, the event is a precursor to the 2022 MBALI International Conference. "The 2022 conference will dovetail with the inaugural African-American Entrepreneurship Development Conference, which is a collaborative effort between UNIZULU and the Appalachian State University in the United States," he said. The multi-national conference comes as part of the grant that UNIZULU received from the US Embassy to forge a working relationship between a South African and an American university.

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