

2017 UNIZULU Highlights

As the end of 2017 draws near, the University of Zululand is closing in a triumphant mood, looking in retrospect at a year that has been characterised by a myriad accomplishments across its four faculties, units and departments. From community engagement initiatives that seek to transform people’s lives to research and innovation activities that seek to find solutions to local, national and even international challenges, these highlights contribute towards the University’s vision of being a leading comprehensive institution that provides quality education. The University looks forward to another year filled with opportunities and productivity.

Faculty of Arts

Accreditation of Academic Programmes

• The Faculty has completed the first stage of getting accreditation for its Bachelor of Arts in Music, Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology; Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts in History (Honours) programmes. The programmes have been approved by the University’s Council and have thus been submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as the Council on Higher Education for accreditation, a process which the Faculty hopes will be finalised next year.

NRF Rating

• Dr Trywell Kalusopa, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies, recently received a C3 National Research Foundation rating, which will be effective from January 2018.

Annual Conferences

• The Faculty successfully held its annual Information Studies (IS) Conference, as well as the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Conference, the attendance of which was excellent. The IS conference was themed Trends in the Management of e-content in the Digital Era, while the HSS Conference was themed Decolonisation of Knowledge Production and Dissemination in the Humanities and Social Sciences. During the



Back row, from left: UNIZULU Chief Financial Officer Zenzele Mzimela; UNIZULU Department of General Linguistics HoD Dr Mthembeni Mncwango; Dr Mbulelo Jokweni, Chief Director: National Language Service in the Department of Arts and Culture; Professor Sandile Songca, UNIZULU Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning; Zanele Mtshweni, Deputy Director: Language Planning and Development in the Department of Arts and Culture, and Dokela Maleke of the Financial Aid Bureau. Pictured in the front row, from left: Prof Gregory Kwamwendo, Faculty of Arts Dean; Nokuthula Mbokazi, Bursary Administrator at UNIZULU and Siph Manganyi, Acting Director: Language Planning and Development in the Department of Arts and Culture.

HSS Conference, the Faculty had the great honour of hosting Prof Kwezi Kwaa Prah, the Founder of the Centre for the Advanced Study of African Society, who gave a keynote address on the decolonisation of education.

Bursaries

• The Faculty is set to receive R3 million funding in 2018 from the national Department of Arts and Culture that will be used to offer bursaries to undergraduate or postgraduate students enrolled for Language Practice courses. The objective of the bursary award is for successful applicants to acquire skills in

any three of the following areas of study: Translation and Editing; Interpreting, Lexicography, Terminology Development and Management; Language Planning, Human Language Technologies or any of the South African official languages with emphasis on indigenous languages and South African Sign Language.

• The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) has informed the Faculty about the availability of postgraduate scholarships (Master’s and PhDs) for students in the following departments: Social Work,

Psychology and Criminal Justice. Students in the three departments are working on their applications, which are due to HWSETA by the end of this month.

Staff Accomplishments

• Prof Catherine Addison, a Full Professor in the Department of English, and Khenani Makhoba, a Lecturer in the Department of African Languages and Culture, published books in the fourth quarter of the year. These academics were the first authors to publish books in their chosen genres. Prof Addison’s book covers the theory of

verse (poetry) novels as well as discusses and analyses the chronological historical aspects of this genre, while Makhoba’s book studies the genre of jokes. • The Faculty boasts three of its academics, Dr Neil Evans, Dr Berrington Ntombela and Dr Mike Reddy, being one of the winners during the University’s Teaching and Learning Awards.

Cultural Thursdays

• In May, the Faculty was instrumental in organising and launching the Cultural Thursdays campaign, an initiative of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) MEC for Arts, Culture, Sports and



Professor Thandi Nzama, the Deputy Dean in the Arts Faculty, with the trophy for the Research Department of the Year award which was scooped by the Faculty’s Department of Political and International Studies during the recent UNIZULU Research Awards.

Recreation, Bongwiwe Sithole-Moloi. It is geared towards promoting social cohesion among the various cultural groups in KZN. The launch began with a cultural parade that saw the MEC leading different groups of people sporting their traditional attire.

Graduation

• The Faculty recorded the highest number of PhD graduates, PhD theses written in IsiZulu as well as PhD and Master’s degrees combined, during the 2017 Graduation.

Staff Recruitment and Promotions

• In a bid to “grow its own

timber”, the Faculty has employed four UNIZULU alumni as permanent lecturers in the departments of Recreation and Tourism, Development Studies, Information Studies and Sociology. Of the four, three are female, which is a strategic move in line with the Faculty’s gender transformation goal. • Dr Neil Evans was promoted to Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies.

Scholarships

• Dr Neil Evans, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies, and Dr Marty Zikhali, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, received the Teaching Ad-

vancement at University (TAU) Fellowship award for 2018/19. The award aims to contribute towards the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa by supporting the development of a cadre of academics across institutions and disciplines as scholars, leaders and mentors in teaching and learning in their institutions or disciplines.

Research

• One of the primary goals of the Faculty is increased research productivity. To this end, two research groups have been established for emerging researchers and female researchers in an effort to mentor and increase their research outputs. The Emerging Researchers’ Group will be championed by Dr Kalusopa, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies, while Prof Antonia Nzama, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts, will mentor the Female Researchers’ Group, with assistance from Prof Gregory Kamwendo, the Arts Faculty Dean. • Staff from the Faculty received several awards at the recent UNIZULU Research Awards. The Department of Political and International Studies received first prize for the Research Department of the Year Award, a huge accomplishment for both the department and Faculty.

Faculty of Education

Community Engagement

• In 2016, the Faculty of Education, seeking to contribute towards improving the matric pass rate in the King Cetshwayo District Municipality (KwaZulu-Natal), engaged the provincial Department of Basic Education to identify seven high schools with a low matric pass rate. The identified schools are: Mbuyiseni, Isikhalasenkosi, Thambolini, Sikhulangelendo, Emkhayideni, Ntongande and Qhakaza High Schools. Upon conducting research to ascertain the factors contributing to the schools’ poor performance, it became apparent that Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Sciences, English, Geography and Accounting were problem subjects. The Faculty thus devised an action plan that entailed conducting winter school and Saturday classes. Lecturers and

40 students in the Faculty of Education were part of the project, providing tuition to the learners. The winter school classes took place from 3-8 July, while Saturday classes ran until the end of September. The student tutors and academics were recognised and awarded at a special closing function organised by the Faculty.

Permanent Appointment of Faculty Dean

• The Faculty celebrates the permanent appointment of its Dean, Prof Mncedisi Maphalala.

Graduation

• The 2017 graduation was another highlight for the Faculty as four of its staff graduated with PhD qualifications. The Faculty prides itself in five of its students receiving the Vice-Chancellor’s Top Achievers Awards.

SASE Conference

• The Faculty boasts 17 staff and five postgraduate students who attended and presented research papers during the 44th Annual Southern African Society for Education International Conference in Botswana from 4-6 October. Over 20 papers were presented by UNIZULU representatives during the conference. Following this conference, two research writing workshops were held to convert the papers presented at the conference into research articles.

Research

• Prof Maphalala and two other academics in the Faculty of Education conducted a research writing workshop in October that was attended by 15 academic staff as part of a research capacity-building programme for emerging scholars. The in-

tensive and interactive training benefited the emerging scholars who, by the end of the workshop, drafted their own research papers towards submitting them to scholarly journals for publication within three to six months of completing the workshop. • The Faculty of Education has been awarded a Collaborative Postgraduate Supervision Grant by the NRF over three years. The funding is aimed at multi-institutional collaborative training of a cohort of postgraduate students in a specific scarce skill discipline or priority research area. This training involves a collaborative network of postgraduate students and supervisors led by the lead applicant, Prof Dumisani Nzima, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education. The collaborative effort involves UNIZULU, University of Venda and University of the Free State. In

July, the Faculty conducted a research writing training that was attended by 65 postgraduate students. It covered topics such as proposal writing, ethics, data analysis and literature review. As a result of this intervention, there has been a large number of research proposals that have been submitted to the Higher Degrees Committee. The project has encouraged peer tutoring among the group, a practice the Faculty is highly impressed by.

New Academic Programmes

• The Faculty will offer two new programmes in 2018. They are the Senior and FET Postgraduate Certificate in Education and the FET Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The Council on Higher Education has also approved three new Bachelor of Education undergraduate degree programmes to be rolled out in 2019.



Prof Mncedisi Maphalala, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, confers a certificate to one of the Faculty students who participated in the winter and Saturday classes initiative.

Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law

• The Department of Accounting and Auditing has collaborated with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in training learners in schools near the University to trade on the stock exchange. The programme is aimed at inculcating investment skills in young learners in line with the University's community engagement endeavours. Through the programme, the Department allocates mentors, who are students at the University, to each school. The effort led to one of the mentors winning an award from the Stock Exchange as a result of them being the most active to trade.

• The Department of Accounting and Auditing students who travelled to the University of Cape Town to study Certificate of Theory in Accountancy (CTA) passed. They also wrote and passed PART 1 (ICT) of the SAICA Board Exam. This is a sign that UNIZULU is on the right track in terms of building a SAICA-accredited programme.

• The South African Institute

of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) team visited UNIZULU to accredit the BCom in Accounting Science programme.

Department of Public Administration Highlights

• The University of Zululand, in collaboration with the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) hosted the SAAPAM 17th annual conference. Themed Ramifications of Public Ethics, Public accountability Public Service delivery: National and International Prism, the conference was attended by delegates from various South African higher education institutions, public and private organisations, as well as neighbouring African countries. Academics from various departments at UNIZULU also presented papers.

• In a bid to expose students to the workplace, and create a quality teaching and learning environment, the Department of Public Administration took its students to the KwaZulu-

Natal Legislature in Pietermaritzburg where the students were exposed to the inner workings of the governing body in relation to their studies. The Department also took its Honours students to the national Parliament as part of its workplace visits programme.

• The Department of Public Administration organised academic seminars for its students. An external person was invited as a speaker on issues affecting disciplines linked to their studies such as accountability, ethics and professionalism, etc. The Department, in partnership with the UNIZULU Convocation, hosted a seminar on Hindrances of Public Financial Management and Accountability in South Africa: Norms and Values Underlying Democratic Public Administration.

Law Department

• Earlier this year, the University received correspondence that its Bachelor of Laws programme had been accredited.



Sphelele Khomo (right), UNIZULU Accounting and Auditing Head of Department, leads the BCom in Accounting Science degree SAICA Awareness Campaign.

• Four students competed in the Lexis Nexis Moot Court Competition hosted by the University

of Pretoria. Out of four, two students from the University of Zululand made it to the semi-

finals. The competition, which is a mock trial, sees students argue it out in a court setting.



Pictured in gowns are UNIZULU students from the Law Department who participated in a mock court session competition organised the University of Pretoria.

Faculty of Science and Agriculture

• The faculty of Science and Agriculture recently appointed two NRF-rated lecturers. The rating of individuals is based primarily on the quality and impact of their research output over the years, taking into consideration the evaluation made by local and international peers. The NRF rating system is a valuable tool to benchmark the quality of research against the best in the world.

• One of these appointments was that of Prof Evelyn Madoroba who joined the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology as Associate Professor. She holds a PhD degree in Microbiology from the University of Pretoria. She also holds a Master's degree in Business Leadership, an MSc degree in Biotechnology and a Specialist Diploma in Medical Bacteriology (including Mycology). Prof Madoroba also has qualifications in Medical Laboratory Technology covering Microbiology, Immunology, Histology, Hematology, Immuno-

matology and Histology.

Prof Madoroba is a NRF C-rated researcher. She has numerous peer-reviewed publications and has written a book entitled Cholera: Current African perspectives. She has presented at both local and international conferences and has extensive experience in research and diagnosis of bacterial diseases. She has successfully mentored, supervised/co-supervised many postgraduate students from different universities in South Africa.

• The second appointment was that of Prof Khajamohiddin Syed as Associate Professor in Biochemistry and Microbiology in a bid to develop scarce skills and train students in advanced scientific research. Prof Syed, who is a world-renowned C1 rated scientist, will also train postgraduate students in advanced bioinformatics research. Through his research, Prof Syed is expected to find novel drug targets against pathogenic diseases such as tuberculosis that

has plagued the continent.

Syed completed his MSc in Biochemistry and a PhD at Sri Krishnadevaraya University, India. After his doctoral studies, he worked as Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of the Free State and later moved to the University of Cincinnati in the USA as a visiting faculty member. Upon his return, he joined the Central University of Technology in the Free State as Associate Professor.

• Another achievement for the Faculty of Science and Agriculture is that of Senior Professor Neerish Revaprasadu, who scooped an award for being the Most Productive Researcher at the recent UNIZULU Research Awards. Prof Revaprasadu has published two books.

• To help upskill its students, the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology signed MoUs with the Cedara College of Agriculture, Tendele Coal Mine near Mtubatuba, Invotech Business Incubator, as well as Hemp Industries Association.



Prof Evelyn Madoroba joined the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology as Associate Professor last month.



Prof Khajamohiddin Syed was recently appointed as Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology.

A year of improved research output for UNIZULU

THE year 2017 was productive for the University of Zululand where research is concerned, with the University not only enjoying improvement in the number of researchers, but also in research output quality.

This is according to Prof Gideon De Wet, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, speaking at the recent UNIZULU Research Awards.

The event is organised annually by the institution's Research Office with the intention

of recognising, and honouring research and innovation excellence while encouraging increased research productivity among UNIZULU academics.

Prof Jesika Singh, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnerships at the University of Limpopo, who was invited as the guest speaker, said researchers needed to "motivate and mentor one another in order to grow as a network".

She urged academics to believe that whatever research

work they conducted mattered.

"Hard work is the greatest driver. If you work hard, success will follow. I congratulate all the awardees and nominees, you are the hard workers of this university. I would like to encourage you to keep going strong and keep your dreams and aspirations aglow with sheer determination and hard work. I wish you success in all your ventures. Remember to keep the flag of the university flying high all the time," said Prof Singh.

Academics were awarded certificates and trophies under six categories namely: Science and Development, Next Generation, Established Researchers, Departments, Special Categories and Prestige Awards.

The prestigious awards were received by the departments of Politics and International Studies; Biochemistry and Microbiology, as well as Economics – which received first, second and third prize of the Research Department of the Year awards respectively.

Prof Gregory Kamwendo, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at UNIZULU, who accepted the award for the Department of Politics and International Studies, said he was proud of the department's accomplishment.

He said that it (the department) had received the trophy as a result of hard work. Prof Kamwendo added that the faculty would encourage its other departments to increase research productivity so as to keep the trophy within the faculty.



Prof Gregory Kamwendo, the Faculty of Arts Dean, receives the first prize for the Research Department of the Year Award for the Department of Politics and International Studies from Prof Jesika Singh, the guest speaker at the event.