



THE MERCURY

TERTIARY Ψ π TIMES

UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor ecstatic about CHE's re-accreditation of institution's LLB Programme

I AM proud to announce that the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has confirmed full accreditation for the LLB programme in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU).

The CHE is the statutory body responsible for quality assurance in higher education in South Africa and thus responsible for accreditation and review of higher education qualifications.

In 2012 the CHE, in conjunction with the South African Law Deans' Association and in consultation with the organised legal professions, worked on the development of a national standard for the LLB qualification, against which all faculties and schools had to evaluate their offerings.

In November 2017 when the

University of Zululand made an important announcement that it would work tirelessly towards an improvement plan to ensure continuity of the LLB programme there was speculation and uncertainty.

We were in no doubt of the quality standards that are incorporated into our LLB programme as attested by leading members in the judiciary who are products of this university. The newly-inaugurated chancellor of the University of Zululand, Justice Raymond Zondo, studied at UNIZULU.

We worked diligently and assured students who had graduated from UNIZULU Law Programmes that they would not be negatively affected by the announcement of the CHE's national review of the LLB qualification. The university was certain that it would

continue to improve on its reputable LLB programme that has produced fine, world-recognised alumni in the practice of law.

We are jubilant to inform the public that we have delivered on our word because we knew for sure that UNIZULU academic outputs are of high standards. The university implemented a turnaround approach and worked collaboratively with the CHE through robust and earnest stakeholder engagements that were aimed at bridging the gap and matching CHE standards. This was also to ensure that the Institutional Improvement Plan is responsive and deals spot-on with the issues raised without delays.

Many of the programmes in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, have undergone internal and external

reviews and re-accreditation. In 2018 the LLB programme and the Accounting programme were both re-evaluated by CHE and South African Institute of Chartered Accountants respectively.

These quality-driven processes have ensured that the various departments reconceptualise the way in which knowledge and sources of knowledge are organised, valued and represented within the respective disciplines.

Law and Accounting programmes have been adapted to the requirements of the professional bodies in relation to the ethical development of their disciplines in a democratic society.

There has been a concerted effort by these departments to add technological innovations in the learning process and most have undertaken to pursue

inquiry-led teaching and learning with a strong emphasis on writing and research.

It came as no surprise, therefore, when at its meeting of June 7, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) reviewed the progress report together with other relevant documentation to determine the progress made in meeting the conditions specified in the HEQC accreditation report.

The outcome stated that based on the evidence provided, the HEQC revised its accreditation decision to full accreditation for the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme offered at UNIZULU.

As the Vice-Chancellor and Rector of this prestigious institution, I would like to convey my appreciation to all role-players in the accreditation process.

Professor Xoliswa Mtsoe, University of Zululand Vice-Chancellor and Rector



Deputy Vice-Chancellor overview on UNIZULU curriculum renewal and transformation

THE University of Zululand (UNIZULU) was mandated by the government to convert to a comprehensive university during the merger of universities. As such, the university recognises the need to transform the curriculum in line with this new mandate.

According to the university's strategic plan, the aim is to have a broad spectrum of programmes characteristic of a comprehensive university and to review, develop and implement review findings in existing curricula. In this regard, the university has embarked on curriculum renewal to increase career education programmes.

The Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law focuses on four key drivers of curriculum transformation which are:

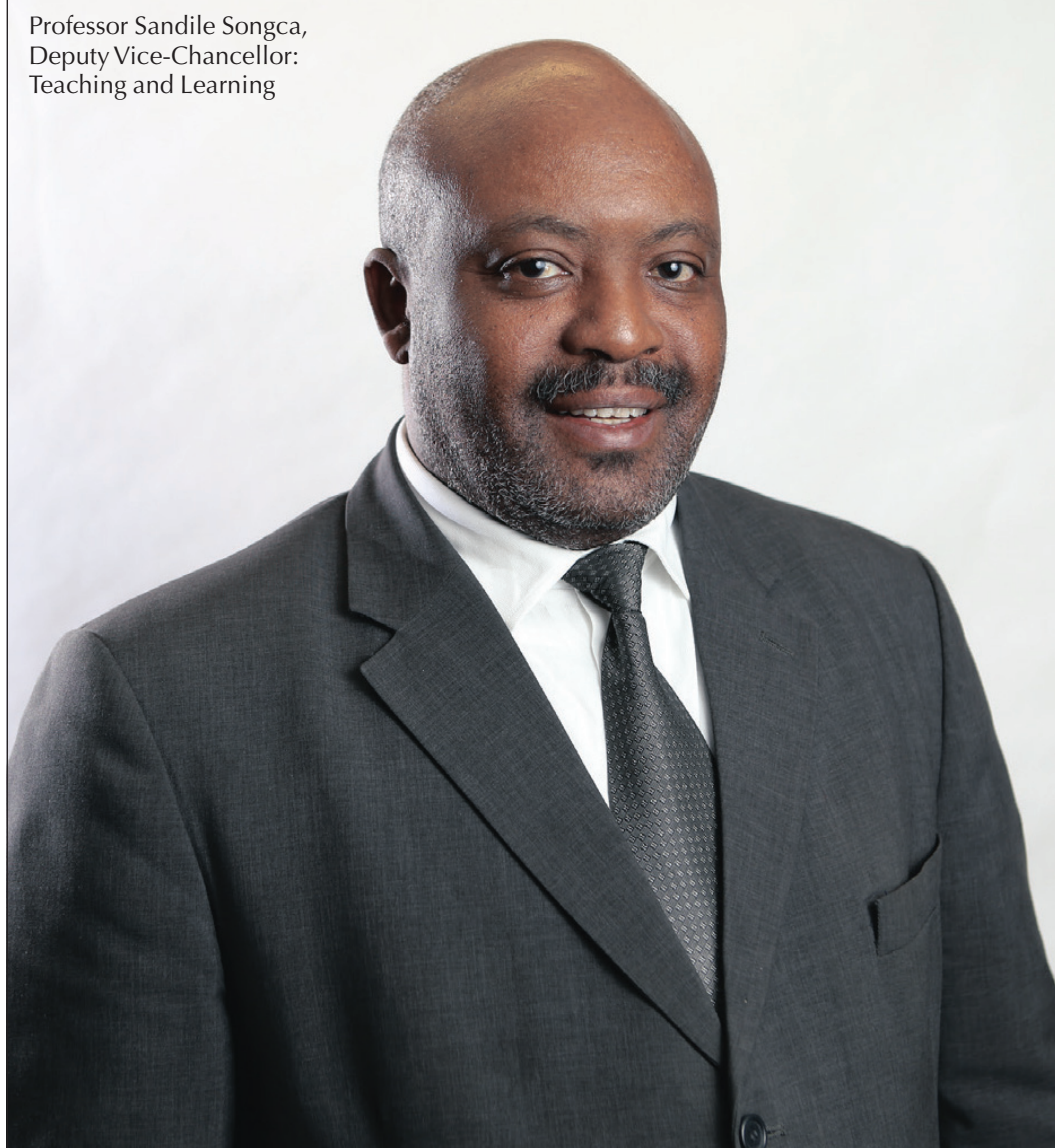
- responsiveness to social context;
- encouraging epistemic diversity;
- renewal of pedagogy and teaching practices;
- culture of openness and reflection.

The successful accreditation of the LLB and Accounting programmes is a result of quality-driven processes that have ensured that various departments reconceptualise the way in which knowledge and sources of knowledge are organised, valued and represented within the respective disciplines.

Law and Accounting have been active in interrogating the requirements of their professional bodies in relation to the ethical development of their disciplines in a democratic society.

In the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, the introduction of electives at level 4 has improved the diversity of the curriculum of the LLB programme. A list of possible electives is displayed at the end of each year and level 3 students are asked to indicate

Professor Sandile Songca, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning



which elective they are likely to pursue at level 4. This serves as a way to assess students' needs and preferences.

This strategy enables students to get into career paths that suit them, especially students who have bursaries from municipalities and South African Revenue Service. The alumni feedback that was made available during the recent LLB review, conducted by the CHE, is available as evidence.

In addition, the LLB pro-

gramme is one of the few law programmes countrywide to offer four legal skills modules that plays a huge role in equipping students with the skills to contribute to society and be efficient legal professionals.

The student voice has played a huge role in the success of the LLB programme. Through Faculty councils' and the Student Representative Council's attention to academics, instances of bias and alienation related to the curriculum are discussed.

The Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law traditionally relied on class representatives to give feedback about the programmes being offered or undergoing renewal.

UNIZULU recognises that a transformed and transformative culture that optimises the growth and potential of all staff and all students is core.

The university would like to thank the team that was responsible for enabling the institution to get full accreditation.

Message from Dr Kanagie Naidoo, Head of Department of Law

THE LLB at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) has, for many years, been a flagship programme of the institution.

The Department of Law has produced many influential and high-ranking officials in the judiciary and legal profession, and still continues to do so. As a department, we pride ourselves in ensuring that our LLB curriculum equips our students with the graduate attributes that make them globally competent.

The LLB being offered at UNIZULU is on par with LLB programmes nationally. With the attainment of full accreditation after the review process,

the Department of Law is destined for growth and is determined to maintain its high standards.

The Department of Law wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Xoliswa Mtsoe, and the executive management of the institution for their confidence in the department and our LLB programme, and for their assistance during the re-accreditation process.

As the Head of the Department of Law, I want to thank the academics and administrative staff in the department for their commitment and co-operation throughout this process.



Dr Kanagie Naidoo, Head of UNIZULU's Department of Law

LLB students elated at results of national review of LLB programme

THE news of the re-accreditation of the University of Zululand's LLB programme has been received with great excitement by the students of the Department of Law.

According to Mthokozisi Khuzwayo, a fourth-year LLB student and member of the Law Students' Council, the notice of the withdrawal of the re-accreditation of the institution's LLB course towards the end of 2017 caused anxiety among students.

"As student leaders, we remained calm and tried to allay the panic of our classmates as this evaluation was going to be beneficial to current and future law students in ensuring that the LLB qualification was of good quality," Khuzwayo said.

He added that the latest outcomes of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) national review of the LLB programme prove that the quality of education offered at UNIZULU was excellent. "The fact that we are studying in a rural-based institution does not make us inferior. Intellectual capacity is not measured by historical



LLB students during an event which the Department of Law held in 2016 to inform the UNIZULU community about the national review process which the CHE had embarked on.

disadvantage, but the quality of education we are receiving which the CHE has confirmed to be superlative," he said.

Thubelihle Mtshali, a fourth-year LLB student, said she expected the final outcomes of the CHE's review to be positive.

"For me, the re-accreditation did not come as a surprise because UNIZULU's LLB programme is considered to be one of the best in the country, so this news has just added the cherry on top. It is good to see that the standard of the programme is

still high. "I am also happy that the programme has been improved to suit modern needs. This means that the institution will continue to produce graduates who are relevant for the law industry," she concluded.

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