



THE University of Zululand (UNIZULU) is undergoing major infrastructure development initiatives, which will help deal with key challenges on a path to creating a good teaching and learning environment for students and staff.

The development and maintenance of infrastructure has been delayed since 2013. At the beginning of 2019, Dr Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, confirmed her support for the development of infrastructure and committed herself to sending a support team of experts to expedite the development.

She also included providing support for the strategic repositioning of the university for academic excellence. At the beginning of March, a multi-disciplinary team of experts, sent by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), arrived at UNIZULU on a two-day visit.

After that, there has been three two-day visits by various experts of this support team. Other visits and training workshops are scheduled between April and July.

This partnership will culminate in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between DHET and UNIZULU. It will guide the support for the next three years and manifest itself through various infrastructure development projects.

The University Council and Management acknowledge the support given by the DHET and the Minister. In terms of internal human capital capacitation and the advancement of infrastructure development, the university has appointed two directors, Musa Mfusi, the Director of Physical Planning: Maintenance and Operations and Malindi Xala, the Director of Physical Planning: New Build.

The university identified six strategic priorities for the period 2016 to 2021. Among them, is the acceleration of infrastructure development.

UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Xoliswa Mtose, said: "Investment in post-sec-

Infrastructure development and physical planning initiatives under way



ondary infrastructure is an investment in South Africa's next generation of students and researchers. Improving the university spaces in our precinct and where innovation takes place will fuel prosperity for years to come."

The support received from DHET gives impetus to the development of infrastructure at UNIZULU and boosts the roll-out of plans such as the development of the University Spatial Framework on

the placement of buildings in the KwaDlangezwa and Richards Bay campuses in a manner that depicts a clear identity and character of UNIZULU as a comprehensive university poised to produce leaders of society.

Ongoing further developments regarding the DHET support and about various infrastructure development projects that are being rolled out will be communicated.



UNIZULU academic selected by minister to spearhead green energy initiatives

A UNIVERSITY of Zululand (UNIZULU) Department of Chemistry academic is ecstatic after being handpicked by the Minister of Science and Technology, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, to form part of a six-member team that will drive renewable energy projects in South Africa.

Dr Linda Linganiso will be working with a delegate from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), two delegates from Stellenbosch University and two delegates from DST.

For Dr Linganiso, the selection is not surprising. "I have engaged DST several times on a number of projects every time I had a strategy to help them fulfil their mandate. My concern has always been to prioritise South African government's concerns or priorities.

"Over the years, it has always been my joy to execute their plans through innovative projects and product development to improve economic growth in the country. Solving problems scientifically makes me tick," the academic said.

The science enthusiast believes that she has a special role to play in helping South Africa transition to a low carbon economy. "I will be more excited when I can put my finger on what I have done to fulfil the Department of Science and Technology's mission to green the economy of South Africa," she said.

True to her nature, Dr Linganiso is involved in a few renewable energy-related projects. Early in 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held delegation-level talks, where they agreed to revitalise bilateral ties.

After that meeting, the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi, India, agreed to partner with South Africa to fast-track research and development in the renewable energy space.

That was followed by a South African delegation, which included Dr Linganiso, visiting India to present the current status of renewable energy, opportunities and barriers to growth in the country.

The Indian delegates presented on the same topics, after which gaps and areas of collaboration were identified



UNIZULU lecturer Dr Linda Linganiso, second from right, during a recent trip to India, where she and other South African delegates met their Indian counterparts to engage on potential renewable energy projects.

by both parties. Plans are in place to fast-track innovative technology development for renewable energy generation and storage.

In the Zululand region, Dr Linganiso was instrumental in the collaboration, between the Department of Chemistry at UNIZULU and the uMhlathuze Municipality, which is set to help the municipality with investigating the technical, technological and economic viability of electricity generation from the municipal waste water treatment plants.

The second phase is to establish biogas digesters integrated in the waste

water treatment plants to generate green electricity.

In the near future, Dr Linganiso said the Chemistry Department intended to develop innovative solar photovoltaic (PV) technologies to provide off-grid electricity.

She reckons Richards Bay is among the hottest regions in South Africa, therefore the heat can easily be translated to electricity through solar PV technologies.

A project of this nature presents huge potential for job creation for people living in the greater Zululand region.

UNIZULU heeds education minister's call to reach out to youth

THE University of Zululand (UNIZULU) was recently invited by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Naledi Pandor, to participate in the Freedom Walk and Economic Opportunities Expo, which was hosted by Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, the Minister of Communications, at Emfundisweni Skills Centre in Ntbankulu, Eastern Cape.

Minister Pandor had invited five Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas), four universities, two Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the Career Development Services Unit to exhibit during the event to help enlighten the youth of Ntbankulu and its surrounding areas on career opportunities available to them.

The expo was attended by grade 11 and 12 learners. About 3 500 learners got a chance to interact with Pandor. She encouraged the youth to follow the entrepreneurship and engineering routes and advised them to submit applications to institutions of higher learning and NSFAS timeously.



The Communications and Higher Education and Training ministries recently joined forces to expose the youth of Ntbankulu in the Eastern Cape to many career opportunities available to them.

She later issued bursaries, learnerships, internships, work-integrated learning opportunities, among other offerings.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams urged young people to have a keen interest in technology and social media to keep pace

with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which was taking hold of every facet of life.

She said the youth needed to take advantage of it to improve their lives and those of their communities.

KINGDOM OF ESWATINI CAREER EXHIBITION



THE University of Zululand (UNIZULU) was among institutions of higher learning that participated in the three-day Kingdom of Eswatini Career Exhibition, held recently in Big Bend, Manzini and Mbabane in Swaziland. The institution was represented by seven individuals from the faculties of Education and Science and Agriculture, as well as the Student Services Department and the Communications and Marketing Division. Over the three days, the UNIZULU team engaged with more than 4 000 learners, who showed an interest in the institution's Agricultural, Science and Education programmes.

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