



UNIZULU Academics scoop Researcher of the Year award

TWO of the University of Zululand's (UNIZULU) renowned scientists each walked away with a Researcher of the Year Award. The ceremony was recently held in India Trichy.

Professor Tshwafo Motaung and Dr Linda Linganiso were the recipients of these awards. Both academics are from the Department of Chemistry in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. The Rula Peace Awards is an international body aimed at supporting and recognising researchers and/or institutions who push the boundaries of basic research and turn scientific imaginations into world-class solutions.

UNIZULU continues to be at the forefront when it comes to research. The two were recognised for their standard of research and its relevance to society. Prof Motaung said he feels honoured to be recognised for his contribution in research. "This serves as a source of inspiration for other researchers within UNIZULU to build their research profiles and compete nationally and internationally. It is also very important that we should benchmark our research to international standards," he said.

The research project on cancer causing more deaths in South Africa than



Prof Tshwafo Motaung receiving the award on behalf of the group that worked on the project.

HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and malaria combined is titled "Encapsulation of gold nanorods with porphyrins for can-

cer treatment and bacterial diseases". "Porphyrins is a chemical that can be extracted from oily marine waste.

However, currently we have purchased it to get the chemistry right. The success of the project means a lot internationally. This project is being swelled by our Master's student, Nthabeleng Hlapisi. Hlapisi is the main author of the critical review, which was recognised internationally as the best research in 2019 in Health Science. Prof Sandile Songca, the former DVC of Teaching and Learning at UNIZULU, is also actively involved in the project. We will stop at nothing to make sure that we have a cheaper, greener and less energy procedure for cancer treatment," said Prof Motaung.

The awardees expressed appreciation for the support and foundation laid by the team, in particular Professor Neerish Revaprasadu of the Department of Chemistry. "The Department of Chemistry in UNIZULU is now richer and internationally recognised because of the culture of research fashioned by Prof Revaprasadu. Not forgetting the hard-working research group members who earned the research group more than eight research awards since 2016. It is because of their positive interactions that kept us motivated to break new ground in this field," Dr Linganiso concluded.

Entrepreneurship Week gives students more alternatives

THE Department of Business Management at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) recently held a campaign for entrepreneurship development, which is aimed at supporting all students considering entrepreneurship as a potential career.

The Student Entrepreneurship Week took place from August 20 to 22, where students were assisted with tips and strategies from experts, mentors and investors on how to go into entrepreneurship.

The platform was used to establish and to help budding entrepreneurs access actionable, experiential knowledge and tools for building sustainable businesses.

The event also created platforms for showcasing undiscovered talents, quality networking, and start-up funding. Entrepreneurship is being looked at as an alternative to job creation.

During the three-day conference, experts led discussions on a wide range of topics, from the higher education institutions play in the development of young entrepreneurs to mentoring programmes.

Zeph Nhleko, the Deputy Director-General from the Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs, shared about what it is that will make students successful entrepreneurs.

He said: "We all know that entrepreneurship is not a magic solution in a context of mass unemployment, but through this initiative, we can alert students to the fact that employment is not their only option to participation in the economy. The economy is growing at a very low rate and it is not creating the jobs that are needed."

Vumile Shangase was announced as the winner under the Indigenous Knowledge System category. She is a third-year student studying co-operative management at the Richards Bay Campus. Shangase's business, Ekhaya Earth Bakers, scooped R50 000. "I took a chance and entered this competition. Never in my wildest dreams did it occur to me that I might win. I started this



The winner of the Student Entrepreneurship Week, Vumile Shangase receiving a certificate from Wiseman Ndlela. He is the Deputy-director from the Department of Science and Technology.

business this year during the Easter holidays."

Shangase, who comes from rural Ndwedwe, bakes cakes without using an oven or electricity. She digs a hole and makes a fire using wood that she collects from the bush. The muffins and queens cakes are sold to schools, as well as local police stations and clinics.

The Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, Professor Lorraine Greyling, congratulated the students who entered and participated in the entrepreneurship week.

"In the current economic climate, many graduates will struggle to find employment, but that does not need to happen to you. All you need is the will and mind-set to be a leader in your field. With the skills and experience of the UNIZULU Entrepreneurship team and the benefit of youth behind you, you have the right mix to make your business idea a success. Remember, it does not matter what you study, every discipline has entrepreneurial opportunities for self-employment," she said.

International cultural exchange workshop a resounding success

THE Department of Creative Arts, together with the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Office, recently welcomed two top universities from the US to a cultural exchange workshop.

The workshop is a subprogramme of the Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA programme, which is a collaborative project between University of Zululand (UNIZULU) and the University of Pennsylvania.

Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA is an annual eight-week programme that offers students an immersion opportunity to advance their language and cultural competency in isiZulu through interaction with isiZulu-speaking faculties, staff, students and families in KwaZulu-Natal.

The platform combines intensive classroom instruction with home stays in urban and rural settings, lecture seminars, outreach cultural activities, and visits to historical and cultural sites.

The recent workshop, held in the Department of Creative Arts Drama Theatre, witnessed a total of 12 students from two of the well-known universities in the world, Howard University and Indiana University-Bloomington, engaging with UNIZULU students and staff members on culture, performance and other matters surrounding the topics.

The Acting Head of the Department of Creative Arts and one of the organisers of the event, Gift Marovatsanga, said the aim behind the platform was primarily for both parties to benefit and exchange knowledge pertaining to culture, theatre performances and history, among other things.

He added that another goal was to ensure that students in his department were exposed to various academic and cultural practices from diverse places and spaces around the world.

"Our students as a department have not had a platform to participate in any international academic/cultural



Attendees of the cultural exchange workshop participating in one of the activities of the event.

exchange programme. The department is working on initiating and brokering memorandums of understanding with various academic institutions locally and globally.

"It is crucial to expose students to these practices as we prepare them to become locally and globally competent citizens. It is in this vein that the program was crafted. The students involved can attest to the fact that such programs create a space for experiential and participatory learning and relearning beyond the curriculum."

A student and one of the attendees

of the event, Sanelisiwe Vuyiswa Biyela, described the event as "enlightening".

"The event was very educative. They (students from US) performed monologues that were giving a picture of where they are coming from. The content and concept in the renditions were enlightening. We also shared a stage piece that talks about the South African culture and history as well," she added.

Also, Biyela said they were given an insight into the industry of creative arts in the US and were advised not to limit themselves to sending applications and undertaking auditions in the country, but

also try the international space as well, as there's a high demand for creative artists who speak African languages.

Mdumiseni Nxumalo of the UNIZULU IKS Office applauded UNIZULU's involvement in the programme.

He said the participation fulfils the University's strategic plan of attracting international students and being a globally competitive institution.

During the eight weeks spent in South Africa, the guests were also given an opportunity to attend a Zulu traditional wedding and visit the Lilly Museum.

Women urged to put their interests first

IN CELEBRATION of Women's Month, the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) recently held the annual Women's Day event to commemorate the 1956 women's march, but to also celebrate the progress that women have made since.

The event used the theme, "Balance for Better", which aims to motivate people globally to collectively create a gender-balanced world.

Dr Judy Dlamini, who is the Chancellor of Witswatersrand University and founding chair of the Mbekani Group, was the guest speaker.

She urged women to take care of themselves first by eating healthily, exercising to manage stress and to prioritise things that matter most to them.

She advised women to pursue their dreams regardless of the challenges that they face by rising above them. She spoke of the strength of women in business leadership positions who are successful despite constant gender bias - sometimes unconscious - that women face in autocratic environments.

Dr Dlamini shared her personal experiences including jaw-dropping truths gained while pursuing her doctoral thesis which led to her writing her book, "Equal but Different".

"I spoke with women from all walks of life; women in leadership, education including safety and health. The aim was to identify common leadership threads and characteristics, as well as other factors such as support received from loved ones and family that contributed to successes that these women achieved. This was done in hope that other women will be able learn from these honest experiences," she said.

From the South African Credit Report, Dlamini cited that, 25% of women in decision-making roles generate 4% in higher cash flow, half of the women in senior management roles generate 10% in higher



Dr Judy Dlamini.

investment and companies with at least three women as its members produce a medium gain of 10% return on equity and 37% earnings per share in comparison with a zero representation.

She emphasised that the ethos of balancing for better is good for balancing shares because it eventually creates economic opportunities.

Dlamini advised women to create an inclusive culture by working with men in eradicating gender inequality and forced patriarchy to create a gender-balanced world.

"We cannot hope to create a world that is free of all ills of inequality, if we, women, are not willing to be in the same room as men when we discuss these challenges or when we celebrate our victories. We need their support if we are to make a meaningful and impactful contribution," she said.

Dr Dlamini applauded UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor Professor Xoliswa Mtofo for being one of the four women vice-chancellors among a total of 26 in the country.

Dr Dlamini concluded with a poem, *Remember Women* written by Reese Leyva, to motivate UNIZULU's community of women to continue striving against all odds and to love themselves in the process.

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