

Prof Madoroba determined to combat antimicrobial resistance through Research Chair

NALEDI HLEFANE

PROFESSOR Evelyn Madoroba, a University of Zululand (UNIZULU) microbiology professor, is poised to make a significant contribution to tackling antimicrobial resistance after securing five-year funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) to hold a Research Chair.

The Chair, titled *Combating Antimicrobial Resistance Among Priority Pathogens Through Surveillance Using One Health Approach*, is funded as part of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI). This project was launched in 2006 by the then Department of Science and Technology together with the NRF. It seeks to attract and retain excellence in research and innovation at South African public universities through the establishment of Research Chairs at these spaces for up to 15 years. At the heart of this initiative is strengthening and improving research and innovation capacity of public universities, for producing high-quality postgraduate students as well as research and innovation outputs.

Prof Madoroba's Chair has been funded under Tier 2. This awarding is made for established researchers with the potential to achieve international recognition for their research contributions in the next five to 10 years. Her Chair is the third to be awarded to a UNIZULU scholar in the past year. This huge milestone is perfectly aligned to one of the university's strategic goals to drive its growth in research and

innovation.

Discovering that her application for the Chair had been successful, Prof Madoroba shared that she was overwhelmed with gratitude as she reflected on her strong support system – both personally and professionally. “As a female Chair-holder, the position represents an important milestone, and I will use the opportunity to intentionally be a role model who inspires, mentors and supports young academics and post-graduate students, especially women, so they pursue leadership and higher academic achievements,” she assured.

Prof Madoroba explained that through the Chair, she seeks to establish a concise, multi-pathogen integrated “One Health” surveillance system that links antimicrobial resistance data across human, animal and environmental sectors. Antimicrobial resistance is a state wherein bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites evolve to withstand drug treatments, making treatment for infections more difficult and increasing mortality risk.

“The data generated is expected to reduce the transmission of antimicrobial resistant pathogens, protect public health and inform policy. The use of a “One Health” approach is important because antimicrobial resistance is a complex, multi-sectoral challenge involving humans, animals and the environment. Through the Chair, I will evaluate medicinal plants and natural products to discover potential novel antimicrobials, which will contribute to providing solutions to the challenge

of antimicrobial resistance using local resources,” she expounded.

Furthermore, research conducted through the Chair will look into current data on antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases and “One Health” concepts in different communities as a way of raising awareness. In the same vein, scholars will “assess knowledge of the role of medicinal plants in the management and cure of infectious diseases, and their role in curbing antimicrobial resistance, in order to raise awareness”.

The overarching goal for the microbiology professor is to create synergy among health scholars so that knowledge produced in any of the relevant sectors can be easily accessible across the board. She believes this approach will help contribute immensely to community health, and importantly, reducing the incidence of drug-resistant pathogens.

“The research will place UNIZULU at the forefront of emerging research on antimicrobial resistance and “One Health”. Research on evaluating medicinal plants and natural products for their antimicrobial potential is expected to contribute to innovation that will generate intellectual property (IP). Generation of IP will attract industry partners,” she said.

As a Chair-holder, Prof Madoroba is excited to foster an inclusive research culture by supporting early-career academics, facilitating interdisciplinary mentoring and ensuring a vibrant and evolving intellectual environment.



Professor Evelyn Madoroba is poised to make a significant contribution to tackling antimicrobial resistance. | Samkele Sokhela

Full circle moment: UNIZULU welcomes Apostle Dr Mandlenkosi Collins Dhlomo as Chancellor

PRECIOUS SHAMASE

AS the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) gets ready for its graduation season – a time defined by the triumph of academic perseverance – the institution also introduces a leader whose life embodies that very spirit of excellence. It is with great pride and honour that UNIZULU welcomes Apostle Dr Mandlenkosi Collins Dhlomo as the university's newly-appointed Chancellor.

For Dr Dhlomo, this appointment is a homecoming as he is a UNIZULU alumnus. He holds a Senior Secondary Teacher's Diploma and a BPaed Degree (specialising in Mathematics and Music). He is also an honorary degree recipient from UNIZULU. His return to the “node for African thought” marks a significant milestone for the university community.

When asked how he felt about the appointment he said, “As both graduate and former employee, I feel deeply honoured and humbled. This role represents not only a privilege but also a responsibility to serve, inspire and contribute to the continued growth and transformation of the university as it shapes future generations in a changing world.”

Visionary leader and global shepherd

Dr Dhlomo is widely recognised as a homecoming and full-circle moment. He is a senior pastor of the Covenant Fellowship Church International (CFCI). What began as a local vision has flourished into a global ministry, with 51 churches across South Africa and a presence in London. Under his leadership, CFCI has become a model of administrative excellence, managed by more than 800 leaders who serve a congregation of more than 15 000 members.

His influence extends far beyond the pulpit. A globetrotter in the service of faith, he has ministered in Spain, Singapore, the United States, Ivory Coast, France and Italy, among many other nations.



For Dr Dhlomo, his appointment as UNIZULU Chancellor is a homecoming and full-circle moment. | James Thwala

Commitment to education and youth

Education remains at the core of Dr Dhlomo's DNA. As the dean and supervisor of the Heritage of Faith Bible College (KZN based), he remains actively involved in the classroom, lecturing intern pastors and mentoring the next generation of leaders.

His dedication to the youth is particularly profound. From helping young people overcome drug addiction to spearheading interventions that encourage academic achievement and professional soundness, he

is a leader who invests heavily in the “leaders of tomorrow”.

He is also a prolific intellectual and creative, and is the author of five books, including *The ABCDE of a Cell Church* and *The Art of Prayer*. His recent musical venture, the album *Devotional Hymns* by Apostle Dhlomo, and his regular columns in national newspapers further highlight a man of diverse talents and deep reflection.

His journey from these very lecture halls to the highest office of the university serves as a beacon of possibility for every graduate crossing the stage this year.

As he prepares to attend his first UNIZULU graduation as Chancellor, Dr Dhlomo shared a special congratulatory message to 2026 graduates. “It is with great pride and heartfelt admiration that I extend warmest congratulations to each one of you on reaching this remarkable milestone. Your success is a testament to your perseverance, discipline and commitment to excellence. Through your time at this institution, renowned for its role in advancing African scholarship and transformation, you have not only acquired knowledge, but have also been shaped to think critically, act responsibly and lead with purpose.”

He added they are about to venture into a space marked by economic uncertainty, rapid technological change and complex social demands. “Yet within these realities lie immense opportunities for innovation, leadership and meaningful contribution. May you rise to this moment with courage and wisdom, using what you have learned to uplift communities, strengthen our nation, and contribute to the progress of our continent. Let integrity guide your decisions, humility ground your success, and excellence define your path. Once again, congratulations on your well-deserved achievement. May your future be marked by purpose, impact and continued growth,” he concluded.

From lecture hall to boardroom

PRECIOUS SHAMASE

IN a significant move for the South African higher education landscape, Samkelo Ndlovu, has been appointed as the National Chairperson for the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Studentpreneurs Community of Practice (CoP).

Ndlovu is a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) student at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU).

Prior to assuming this new role, Ndlovu was a deputy chairperson. He will now be responsible for providing leadership and guidance to CoP members and driving projects in alignment with EDHE objectives, among others.

The news of Ndlovu's achievement was met with elation by the institution, and especially Professor Noku-thula Kunene, Vice-Chancellor and Principal. “We warmly congratulate Samkelo Ndlovu on his outstanding appointment as National Chairperson for Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education within the Studentpreneurs Community,” she said. “This remarkable achievement reflects not only his leadership and commitment to innovation, but also the calibre of students emerging from the University of Zululand. We are confident that he will make a meaningful contribution to advancing student entrepreneurship across the sector and inspire many others to follow in his footsteps.”

As a seasoned student entrepreneur himself, Ndlovu's appointment signals a shift towards leadership that is rooted in lived experience, empathy and a fierce commitment to student-led economic transformation.

For Ndlovu, the motivation to lead wasn't born out of a desire for titles, but from the stark reality of the South African job market. “What inspired me is my love for entrepreneurship and the reality that many students graduate with qualifications but without opportunities,” he explained. “I have lived that fear, and I have seen how entrepreneurship can transform it into hope.”

Balancing studying towards a



Samkelo Ndlovu is the new National Chairperson for the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Studentpreneurs Community of Practice (CoP). | Xolani Ncube

demanding law degree with three businesses taught Ndlovu the “resilience, discipline and empathy” required to lead others in the same position. “I know what it means to balance deadlines with survival, ambition with uncertainty,” he said.

Unpacking his plans for his tenure, Ndlovu mentioned inclusivity as his cornerstone vision. Coming from UNIZULU, he understands that students in rural-based universities often face vastly different challenges to those in urban hubs.

“Inclusivity is not something we will talk about; it is something we will actively design for,” Ndlovu asserted. He intends to ensure that the CoP representation reflects the diverse geography of South Africa, ensuring no student feels “too far, too small or too under-resourced” to participate in the national economy.

Looking ahead, Ndlovu sees the EDHE studentpreneurs evolving into a formidable force in the South African economy. His goal is to move beyond isolated businesses towards a collaborative ecosystem in which student-led start-ups can scale into established enterprises before the founders even toss their graduation caps.

“The future is not just about producing graduates,” Ndlovu concluded. “It's about producing job creators, problem solvers and leaders. I want to leave behind a system that works better for students than the one I found.”

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