

Dear SPU Community

It is hard to believe that we are now celebrating our fifth year as Sol Plaatje University.

We have made remarkable progress when one looks back at year one with our first intake of 134 students. We will soon be welcoming over 2,000 students in 2019.

More good news is that we have received full accreditation for a further 10 programmes. These are:

Programmes fully accredited

- B.Ed.(Hons) in Curriculum Studies
- Advanced Diploma in ICT in Applications Development
- B.Sc (Hons) in Data Science
- B.Sc.(Hons) in Mathematical Sciences
- B.Sc.(Hons) in Computer Sciences
- Advanced Diploma in Management
- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Management
- Bachelor of Social Sciences Honours (Heritage Studies)
- Bachelor of Social Sciences Honours
- BA (Hons) in Languages.

The programmes which we will offer in 2019 are:

- B.Ed. (Hons) in Curriculum Studies
- Advanced Diploma in ICT in Applications Development
- B.Sc. (Hons) in Data Science
- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Management
- Bachelor of Social Sciences Honours in Sociology.

We will only market these programmes once we have the requisite staff and infrastructure in place; however, this accreditation is proof that SPU has gained a reputation for academic quality in a short space of time.

We have also produced the first data science graduates on the African continent.

Our SPU is becoming recognised for excellence and I wish to express my appreciation to both academic and administrative staff for the support you have given to this exciting business of building a new university.



As the year closes, I wish you all a peaceful festive season and look forward to welcoming you back in 2019.

Prof Yunus Ballim
Vice-Chancellor

PROCUREMENT OPENS ITS DOORS

On 30 November, SPU held a procurement day in a fresh, innovative manner. The event was an interactive process to engage participants and provided access to the University's sources of information.

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SPU SAYS FAREWELL TO HEAD OF EDUCATION

Prof Gawie du Toit will retire from the higher education sector after more than 30 years at the end of the 2018 academic year.

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SPU GEARS UP FOR GRADUATION

SAT, 15 DEC 2018

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OVER 400,000
APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED FOR
2019

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NRF APPROVES FOUR GRANTS FOR SPU ACADEMICS

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National
Research
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RETREAT HELPS DEVELOP WRITING ABILITIES

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HEI-TVET REGIONAL COOPERATION ESTABLISHED

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LATEST DHET REPORT SHOWS IMPROVEMENTS FOR SA UNIVERSITIES

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THE SPU E-BRIEF IS PRODUCED BY THE SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY FOR ITS EMPLOYEES.

Contributions, comments and suggestions are welcome and these can be sent to comms@spu.ac.za

The next edition is due out in February 2019.

Interim editor: Prof Patrick FitzGerald



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e-BRIEF

PROCUREMENT OPENS ITS DOORS

On 30 November, SPU held a procurement day in a fresh, innovative manner.

The event was an interactive process to engage participants and provided access to the University's sources of information, explained the process of vendor registration and how to get onto databases.

Set up in the format of a festive fair, booths were manned by the different stakeholders in the SPU procurement process.

There were also four information sessions consisting of presentations and question and answer sessions. In order to support the initiative and not rely on a single opportunity for the catering of teas and lunch, a number of vendor stalls provided various meal options.

All registered participants received a food coupon to make their own selection of the options available.

SPU supports an open and transparent procurement process in response to its role in promoting local economic development and empowerment through procurement of good, services and infrastructure.



Top: Project Administrator Luzanne Geldenhuis and Director of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Christine-Ann Paddon in conversation.
Bottom: Facilitator Mark Burke summarises the discussions.

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SPU BIDS FAREWELL TO HEAD OF EDUCATION



Prof Gawie du Toit will retire from the higher education sector after more than 30 years at the end of the 2018 academic year.

Professor Du Toit has enjoyed an illustrious career in higher education where he has stewarded research in education planning with a keen interest in mathematics education.

As the second employee of Sol Plaatje University in 2013, Prof Du Toit has seen the School of Education grow to 770 students at the start of 2018 from 45 in 2014.

Education staff numbers have also increased substantially to 40 in 2018, a big leap from the five which started in 2014.

Prof Du Toit says that “it has been an unbelievable journey since 2013.”

He recalls how in 2013, the Department took a somewhat unconventional approach to telephoning possible students and convincing them to become Education’s pioneering students at SPU.

MORE ABOUT PROF GAWIE DU TOIT

Prof Du Toit holds a HED, an MSc (Mathematics) and a PhD (Didactics), all from the University of the Free State.

He joined the higher education sector in 1987 when he became a senior researcher in the Research Institute for Education Planning at the University of the Free State.

His research focus was on Mathematics Education. In 1997 he was appointed as Head of Department (HoD) of the Department of Didactics (later known as Curriculum Studies) in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State.

He became Programme Director: Undergraduate programmes in 2010 at the same institution.

In 2013, he was seconded to SPU with the assignment to establish the School of Education. In 2016, he was appointed Head: School of Education at SPU.

His research focus is on mathematics education and curriculum development.

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SPU GEARS UP FOR GRADUATION

SPU is all set for graduation which is expected to take place on Saturday, 15 December 2018 at the examination hall at Central Campus.

Over 200 students will graduate from the Schools of Humanities, Natural and Applied Sciences, and Education.

THE GRADUATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN TWO SESSIONS:

09:00 to 10:30

Schools of Humanities,
and Natural and Applied Sciences



12:00 to 13:30

Schools of Economic and
Management Sciences, Education



Guest speakers

FIRST SESSION

Advocate Chantelle Williams who is the Northern Cape Provincial Head for the South African Human Rights Commission

SECOND SESSION

Maira Marais-Martin who is a member of the University's council and is the Northern Cape Public Service Commissioner



Maira Marais-Martin.

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NSFAS RECEIVES OVER 400,000 APPLICATION FOR 2019



Higher Education and Training Minister Naledi Pandor says the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has received more than 400 000 funding applications for the 2019 financial year.

Pandor said this when she briefed the media in Cape Town on Tuesday.

The briefing comes after applications for funding for the 2019 academic year closed on 3 December following a two-day extension from the 30 November 2018 deadline.

"As we prepare for next year, the 2019 application cycle has proceeded relatively smoothly with more than 400 000 applications received between the opening of applications on 3 September and the closing of applications on 3 December," she said.

Pandor said on average, NSFAS received more than 3,200 applications a day over the period from September to December, with the number reaching as high as 30,000 on one of the days.

Out of all the applications, 63% were females while males made up 37% of the applications.

A total of 34,413 applications were received from social grant beneficiaries. Students who are beneficiaries of the South Africa Social Security Agency automatically qualify in terms of the financial qualification criteria and will be funded if admitted and registered at a TVET college or university.

"However, it is a concern that only 24% of the applications are from learners who wish to enrol at TVET colleges, with the balance of 88% being applications for universities," the Minister said.

Pandor said of all the applications, the highest number, 95,523, was received from the KwaZulu-Natal province. The number represents 45% of the total number of learners that wrote their National Senior Certificate in the province, while the lowest number was from the Northern Cape with 2,573 applications.

She said the success of the current application process can be attributed to a number of factors – including the revised and easy-to-complete online application system, which allowed applicants to complete an application within five minutes; the simplicity of the on-line and manual form with fewer fields to fill; and the accessibility of NSFAS where applicants have been able to apply at the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) as a result of the scheme's long-standing partnership with the agency.



NSFAS reaches out to prospective applicants

Pandor said, meanwhile, that NSFAS went on the road and reached out to learners across the country to encourage them to apply for the bursary scheme for next year.

This included visits to community centres, shopping malls, high schools, clinics, churches, door-to-door campaigns and taxi ranks. She said this was also an opportunity for NSFAS to engage with parents and working youth who commute daily in the early hours to drive the application message home to their children and siblings.

"Through this campaign, NSFAS accessed as many people across as wide an area as possible, to ensure that everyone who may have wanted to apply for NSFAS was able to do so.

"NSFAS has informed me that feedback from applications has been positive, especially the fact that applications can be made on-line with a cellphone, and progress can be tracked on the cellphone. Nevertheless, manual applications are still accepted and have been made in significant numbers in instances where access to technology remains a challenge."

APPLICANTS:
63% FEMALE
37% MALE

APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED FROM
SOCIAL GRANT
BENEFICIARIES:
34,413

HIGHEST NUMBER
RECEIVED FROM
KWAZULU-NATAL:
95,523

Requirements for qualification

Pandor said the scheme was in the process of evaluating all applications received. The evaluations process checks whether applicants are eligible for funding by verifying all data received by students with third parties like the SA Revenue Service and Home Affairs.

"To qualify for funding a student must meet the financial eligibility criteria and register at an institution for an approved programme. Successful students will receive bursary funding to cover their tuition fee for their registered programme and an allowance for learning materials. They may also qualify for subsidised accommodation and transport allowances where applicable," she said.

She said NSFAS will communicate to students who meet the financial eligibility criteria and have received an academic offer via SMS and email at the beginning of January, and once academic results have been made available to NSFAS.

"Funding is only confirmed once a student has met the financial eligibility criteria and is formally registered at a public TVET college or university for an approved funded programme.

"During this process, NSFAS will work closely with institutions to ensure that integration of data is quick and seamless to allow the timeous release of funds to students and to avoid any repetition of the delays of 2018, where some qualifying students were left frustrated, homeless, hungry and without confirmation of their funding," she said.



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SPU GETS ITS FIRST NRF RATED ACADEMIC

Dr Nhlanhla Mpofo who is a Senior Lecturer and Director Teaching, Learning and Programme Development, has been awarded a Y2 rating as a researcher by the National Research Foundation. South Africa's researchers are categorised into five categories including the promising young researcher or the Y category.

This rating is awarded to young researchers (40 years or younger), who have held the doctorate or equivalent qualification for less than five years at the time of application, and who are recognised as having the potential to establish themselves as researchers within a five-year period after evaluation, based on their performance and productivity as researchers during their doctoral studies and/or early postdoctoral careers.

Nhlanhla is also a Fulbright (<http://bit.ly/2EhzmPA>) alumni and was recently inducted to the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) this year as one of the top 10 young Scholars in South Africa (<https://www.assaf.org.za/index.php/news/496-top-scholars-in-south-africa-honoured>).

Nhlanhla also holds a NRF Thuthuka Grant (Rating) which she was awarded for 2018-2020. In collaboration with Dr Lizette deJager from University of Pretoria, Prof Mncedisi Maphalala from the University of Zululand and Prof Kathy Fox from the University of North Carolina (USA), Nhlanhla is the principal investigator in a study that seeks to understand how non-English language speakers in English medium high schools develop competence in their content knowledge vocabulary during initial teacher training and in the actual teaching practice.

Visit one of South Africa's leading think publications, The Conversation, to read Nhlanhla's articles on teaching in Zimbabwe, and student teachers and distance learning at <http://bit.ly/2zjbW22>. Also visit her website for more on her work <https://nhlanhlampofu.com>



Dr Nhlanhla Mpofo

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NRF APPROVES FOUR GRANTS FOR SPU ACADEMICS

Earlier this week, the National Research Foundation announced that it had awarded four grants to SPU academics.

This was made up of one new grant which was awarded to NAS' Dr Kamila Sekonya.

The remaining two grants made to NAS' Dr Jeremia Sefadi and Ayanda Zungu are continuations of current grants.

All NAS grants were made to academics in the Department of Physical Sciences.

The last grant was made to the NRF Y2 rated researcher Dr Nhlanhla Mpfu and is another existing grant.



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RETREAT HELPS DEVELOP WRITING ABILITIES

The University has just released a 90-page publication – Scholars research writings - that shows off the writing skills of six of the University's Next Generation of Academics Programme (nGap) cohort.

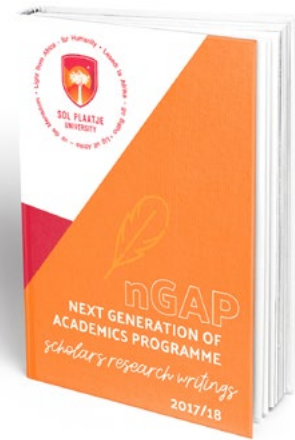
The six nGap protégés attended the first retreat held by the University earlier this year which set out to improve the writing abilities of selected academic staff.

nGap, a national higher education and training programme, aims to grow the presence of women and black academics at the senior levels.

In the publication's foreword, Vice-Chancellor Prof Yunus Ballum says that since 2014, SPU has successfully participated in each call for applications.

He explains that writing for young academics is intimidating and this retreat helped to build the confidence of these academics.

The academic backgrounds of those attending ranged from anthropology, creative writing, education, entrepreneurship, palaeontology and statistics (data analytics).



DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE COPY OF THE NGAP – SCHOLARS RESEARCH WRITINGS TO BE UPLOADED SOON ON THE SPU WEBSITE.

*The academics featured in the publication are
Itumeleng Masiteng, Laura Arnold,
Galaletsang Gail Motlhaudi, Lethani Ldwandwe,
Nyabe Mohale and Sabata Mokale.*

Contributors

Itumeleng N. Masiteng
A Bone to pick: Corruption vs Repatriation: Understanding the coexistence of corruption and repatriation of human remains in South African museums
Itumeleng Masiteng is a trained M. Archivist and a qualified Archaeologist by profession. Ms. Masiteng is currently pursuing her Masters Degree at the University of Pretoria.
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Laura Arnold
Practice makes perfect: A MEd approach for Human Resource Management Honours students at a South African university
Laura Arnold is a lecturer and teaching practice coordinator at Sol Plaatje University. She recently completed her Master's in Education. She intends to register for a PhD in Education, in the field of Teaching Practice, this year. She has published her articles in accredited journals.
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Galaletsang Gail Motlhaudi
Business practices and corporate entrepreneurship as imperatives for SME growth.
Galaletsang Gail Motlhaudi is a lecturer at Sol Plaatje University and a PhD researcher, with a BSc in Communications Science, BA Honours in Business Management and a MEd in Business Management. She is a business and self-empowered person who strives in teaching a lot of students in all that she does.
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Lethani Ndwandwe
Single and multiple missing data imputation techniques: A comparative application on obesity data.
Lethani Ndwandwe is a young man who spent a lot of time trying to understand how the world works and how certain things could be done in a more interesting way. Lethani obtained his BSc in Applied mathematics, BSc Hon in Statistics and MSc in Statistics and he is currently employed at Sol Plaatje University as a lecturer in Statistics. He is currently pursuing his PhD with the university of KwaZulu Natal.
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Nyabe Mohale
Stable carbon isotope analyses for reconstructing paleo-diet of megaherbivores and paleo-environment of the Karoo region in South Africa.
Nyabe Mohale works as an academic at the Sol Plaatje University in the School of Humanities. She is currently pursuing her Master in Environmental Management at University of the Free State. Her research focuses on the Late Pleistocene paleoenvironment of the South African central interior. Her current research is relying strongly on stable isotope analyses for understanding the paleo-environments and dietary behaviour of ancient herbivores of the region and also how these species differently responded ecologically to climate change.
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Sabata Mokale
"After Hours"
Sabata Mokale holds MA in Creative Writing from Rhodes University where he is pursuing PhD in African Languages. He is the author of The Story of Sol T. Phiso (2017), Finding Trauma (2016) (Gabo Press) (a collection of English poems), a Seswame novel titled Ga le Modisa (Gabo Publishing/Oxford University Press), a Seswame young adult novel called Dikabel (Gabo Publishing/Oxford University Press) and Kantsamane in My Times (The Inweasel Publishing), a collection of newspaper columns. He has also translated Gaba Molepa's Seswame books from English to Seswame. These are Semela se Dikane (Our Story Mags), UNZI Press) and Dikane se Alpha (Stories of Africa, UNZI Press). He is the recipient of the South African Literary Award (2017), MNET Literary Award for Best Novel in Seswame (2017), MNET Film Award (2017) and Lesedi in Afrika Award (2017).
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NORTHERN CAPE HEI-TVET COOPERATION ESTABLISHED



Five post-school education institutions in the central inland region have established an initiative to collaborate in a number of focus areas to the benefit of communities in the region.

Established during an inaugural meeting in Bloemfontein on 14 November 2018, the Higher Education Regional Development Initiative of Central South Africa (HERDIC-SA) will collaborate in a manner that delivers operational and academic benefits to each institution, increase benefits to communities in the region, and respond to the need for high-level learning opportunities in South Africa.

The collaboration with critical stakeholders in support of development in the region, as expressed in the partnership of teaching, learning, research, and engaged scholarship aspirations and the pursuit of mutually beneficial synergies and benefits of scale in critical support structures, was highlighted.

During the inaugural meeting, it was unanimously agreed that working together for enhanced access to higher education, staff development, and student welfare initiatives, as well as regional collaborations with the wider public sector and business, could have a transformative effect on the capacity and sustainability of the communities in the central inland region.

The five institutions that form part of the initiative are: Motheo TVET College (Bloemfontein); Northern Cape Urban TVET College (Kimberley); Sol Plaatje University (SPU) (Kimberley); University of the Free State (UFS) (Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa Campuses); and the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) (Bloemfontein and Welkom).

During the meeting, the importance of collaboration between higher education institutions and colleges of technical and vocational education training in creating synergies and leveraging joint capabilities to enhance development, was highlighted.

The focus areas that HERDIC-SA will work on include operational efficiencies (including shared services), articulation between the institutions (including teaching and learning), research and innovation, community engagement (including marketing and communication), and staff development.

The operational model will consist of task teams for each of the focus areas, consisting of representatives from each member institution. The task teams will report to a steering committee. It is envisaged that HERDIC-SA will be operational by March 2019.

Representatives from the various post-school education institutions attending the inaugural meeting were, from the left: Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Central University of Technology Prof Henk de Jager; Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Sol Plaatje University Prof Yunus Ballim, Principal of Motheo TVET College Dipiloane Phutsisi, Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Student Affairs and Community Engagement at the UFS Prof Puleng LenkaBula, Coordinator of HERDIC-SA Prof Nicky Morgan and Principal of the Northern Cape Urban TVET Brian Madalane.



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LATEST DHET REPORT SHOWS IMPROVEMENTS FOR SA UNIVERSITIES

In its latest annual report, the Department of Higher Education and Training has set out some of the developments for the sector over the past financial year.

It says the total audited and verified student headcount enrolment at public higher education institutions (universities) was 975,837 for the 2016 academic year. This includes full and part-time enrolments for contact and distance studies. This is somewhat down when compared to enrolments during the 2015 academic year.

The Department explains that the national aim is to increase the total headcount in higher education to 1,6 million by 2030, as envisaged by the National Development Plan (NDP) and the White Paper for PSET, 2013.

The good news is that the total number of university graduates produced per annum grew to 203,076 in the 2016 academic year. This represents an exceeded target of 190,386 by 12,690 (6.7% above the target).

Furthermore, the number of research masters and doctoral graduates increased at a higher rate than the overall number of graduates

The number of research masters' graduates increased from a total of 6,460 graduates during the 2013 academic year to 7,968 at the end of the 2016 academic year, representing a total growth of 23.3% and an average annual increase of 5.8%.

The number of doctoral graduates increased more steeply from 2,051 to 2,797 or by 36.4% over the same period with an average annual growth of 9.1%.

In relation to scarce skills, the system produced 12,386 engineering graduates, 10,087 animal and human health graduates, 8,093 life and physical science graduates and 22,123 teacher education graduates in 2016.

The system targets as indicated in the 2017/18 APP of 13,000 graduates in engineering sciences, 10,400 in human and animal health and 8,300 in natural and physical sciences were not met, while the target of 20,800 in teacher education was exceeded.

During 2017/18, a further R978,482 million was allocated for infrastructure development at these universities and both new university campuses – Sol Plaatje and Mpumalanga are developing rapidly and in accordance with their long-term development plans."

Source: DHET annual report 2017/18

TOTAL NUMBER
OF UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES PER
ANNUM GREW TO
203,076

NUMBER OF
RESEARCH
MASTERS'
GRADUATES
GREW BY
23.3%

NUMBER OF
DOCTORAL
GRADUATES
GREW BY
36.4%



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STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Annalene Marais,

CA (SA) joins SPU as new **CFO**

Annalene has experience in accounting and auditing in various sectors of the economy including agriculture, mining, local and provincial government. She is ambitious with a passion for people and the profession.

As an experienced, accomplished and versatile finance professional with extensive, experience-based knowledge of financial policies, she demonstrates solid analytical and team management skills.

Annalene was selected as one of the Top 35 under 35 CA (SA) finalists by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) in 2018.



Annalene Marais, newly appointed CFO.

Abongile Zweni

has been appointed as a **lecturer in financial management** (nGAP) in the School of Economic and Management Sciences.

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NEWS FROM ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATION

ESKOM SCIENCE EXPO PROJECT



SPU, as part of its community outreach initiative, seeks to establish a partnership with the organisers of the Expo for Young Scientists in the Northern Cape to establish a collaborative relationship with them and with participating schools within the Frances Baard education district.

Phase 1 of the SPU project that dealt with hosting workshops at the University for learners from participating schools ended on 3 August 2018.

Learners presented their science projects, either completed or partially completed.

With the assistance of the mentor-student teachers (both from the Intermediate Phase and Senior/FET Phases), and lecturers involved with the project, learners received guidance on how to present, display and interact with the judges regarding their science project during the regional science expo competition held in August at the Mayibuye Centre in Galeshewe.

In Phase 2 of the SPU project, nine of our senior science education students applied to act as shadow judges or as judges. Transport to and from the university residence and the science expo venue was provided by the Department of Basic Education, Northern Cape.

Feedback on the 2018 SPU Project

- Schools that participated in the SPU-run workshops expressed their appreciation to the University for hosting workshops for their learners and exposing learners to an environment that motivated them to develop their interest in science.
- It was the first time in the SPU project that a school entered the Technology Innovation category with the emphasis on robotics. We need to bring on board our Technology staff in the future to participate in the project.
- The four participating schools were always in full attendance at all the workshops and the relationships with the respective science teachers from the participating schools became well established.
- Two learners from the project won bronze medals for their science projects.

Future plans

- To encourage participation in the fabrication of projects in the field of robotics.
- Establish and develop a much more cordial and professional relationship with the coordinators of the regional science expo.
- To plan workshops that are more interactive and to invite good science teachers to make input in guiding learners in their decision-making and fabrication of their science projects.
- To encourage our senior science students to participate in the project either as mentors or to become judges.

ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES



SPU HOSTS LEADING BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR

SPU recently hosted a public lecture entitled: Getting the most out of your enterprise and supplier development.

There are hundreds of enterprise and supplier development programmes available to corporate companies in South Africa. However, most of these programmes are not producing the results that were planned or anticipated.

Speaker Allon Raiz unpacked the major design flaws inherent in many of these programmes and discussed how organisations can design more effective programmes that will suit their specific needs.

Allon Raiz is the CEO of Raizcorp which, according to one of the world's leading financial publications The Economist, is the only genuine incubator in Africa.

He is recognised both globally and locally as a thought leader and innovator in the field of entrepreneurial development and business incubation.



Allon Raiz, CEO of Raizcorp.

NEWS FROM ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

HUMANITIES

SPU FLIES FLAG AT AFRICA WORKSHOP

Dr Garth Benneyworth represented SPU and South Africa as a panellist on a World Heritage and Educational Institutions in Africa Workshop earlier this year

His paper was entitled, "Building futures through developing heritage studies as a learning and economic resource."

The three-day workshop brought together African academics and African World Heritage experts who have expressed interest in the English-speaking African university network to facilitate their contributions to the further development of a regional network.

The workshop was hosted by the Great Zimbabwe University in Zimbabwe as part of a project entitled "Integration of World Heritage Curriculum in African Educational Institutions."



NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

TOP BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE HEADS TO RHODES FOR HONOUR

SPU biological sciences graduate Tshepiso Seshuwane has been awarded a prestigious Rhodes University bursary to complete his honours.

This follows a strong recommendation from SPU's Dr Adebowale based on the student's exemplary academic track record. The bursary was awarded as part of the Access climate change programme in Rhodes University's Department of Botany.

Tshepiso will specialise in research on the impacts of elevated carbon dioxide on C3 and C4 plants, including crops. C3 and C4 plants are those that fix carbon from the atmosphere (via photosynthesis) in different ways to maximise their carbohydrate production.

His interest in life sciences started at high school where it was his favourite subject and where he was fascinated with human biology. A love for wildlife wasn't too far behind.

This interest and fascination led to an outstanding undergraduate performance where Tshepiso has excelled and caught the attention of his lecturers.

In his first and second year, he achieved distinctions for biology. Another distinction followed in his second year for zoology with good performances in the first semester of his third year. Consistent good performance were also evidenced in life sciences where he has ranked second in his class.

Head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Sciences Dr Doug Harebottle says Tshepiso is diligent, studious and extremely conscientious.

"He works hard, and is able to grasp concepts and knowledge easily and then apply these in all areas of his studies. He has shown dedication in all tasks given to him and was always punctual when handing in assessment work."

Harebottle explains that Tshepiso has shown great maturity for a third year student that is extremely encouraging. It displays a confidence that has allowed him to excel in his academics over the last three years.

Tshepiso says that he is very happy to have received this award as it allows him to work with one of the global experts Prof Brad Ripley on the climate change impact of plants. "SPU's staff have been helpful and worked hard to make the courses stimulating and interesting.

"Being a new university small classes were particularly advantageous - they were intimate, and I was able to form close relationships with the lecturers and classmates."



Tshepiso Seshuwane flanked by the Head of the Biological and Agricultural Sciences Department, Dr Doug Harebottle (left) and Botany lecturer Dr Adebunle Adebowale (right).

REBAONE TALKS ABOUT CHINESE ICT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Huawei, in partnership with Department of Telecommunication and Postal Services (DTPS), has offered the Seeds for the Future programme since 2016.

Each year, the partnership invites 10 South African students to China for international training in Beijing and Shenzhen.

The students receive training in technologies such as LTE, 5G, and cloud computing, and access Huawei's most advanced labs for practical experience. The training programme includes cultural experiences.

SPU student Rebaone Moretlwe was selected for the programme in 2017.

"This was a huge achievement for me, given where I come from ... a small place called Taung.

"My experience in China was amazing, and I witnessed high levels of ICT usage in China, where almost everything is done and paid electronically.

"You find a QR code on everything and everywhere like in vending machines, bicycles, meter taxis, and at the restaurant tables.

"In Beijing, I attended cultural classes where I learned Mandarin, calligraphy and painting.

"During class, we only spoke Mandarin. We also sang in Mandarin and even performed a drama in Mandarin.

"In Shenzhen, we learnt more ICT skills. On the last day, we wrote an exam based on theory and practical experiences. I successfully graduated thereafter.

"As a software developer, it is my duty to solve problems on a daily basis and I have the responsibility to teach people about the benefits of well-developed software.

"ICT is a combination of Information, knowledge, processes and technology to provide a foundation for driving efficiencies and fuelling innovation. It plays an important part in everyone's lives.

"I wish to express my thanks to DTPS and Huawei for the opportunity."



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY HELPS TO FEED THE HUNGRY



SPU has formed a partnership with the University through its Economic and Management Sciences School.

The collaboration began with SPU sending a team to participate in the Meals on Wheels (MONW) annual cook-off in November this year.

Sol Plaatje University was one of four organisations which participated in the event which aimed to cook enough food to feed more than 3,000 needy people.

Head of the EMS school Prof Collins Miruka says that “we managed to feed all the communities we targeted and to many people, the cook-off was a huge eye-opener to the reality of the lack of food security in South Africa.”

“Meals on Wheels Community Services is a non-profit organisation providing cooked meals to the poorest of the poor, vulnerable persons, children, and the elderly. We provide community support, infrastructures, and services to those in need. We are happy to state that MOWCS NC has formed a partnership with Sol Plaatje University under the leadership of Prof Collins Miruka,” says MONW’s Bevan Jenneke.

“As an NGO, we are fully aware that our collaboration has not just been about achieving the significant things like providing meals to the poor, but the experience to work together and to help the less fortunate by improving the quality of the lives by using the resources that we have.

“We would like to restore the dignity that comes with the ability of individuals to better provide for their families and loved ones.

“Because of the complexity of these problems, we need to take hands and form alliances and partnerships with like-minded individuals, companies and organisations to make available the most significant impact and influence, and at the same time admit that we can do more, achieve more, touch more and improve more lives together than alone.”



NAS STUDENTS SHOW OFF THEIR WEB SKILLS

On completion of the first-year multimedia foundations I module for the ICT diploma at SPU, students should be able to understand the essential multimedia concepts for the Web.

In addition, students should then be able to plan, design and develop a multimedia website with specific use of HTML, XHTML or web authoring.

Since 2014, all group projects were community-based projects, requiring students to visit their local communities.

The objective is to strive for the upliftment of communities through specific communication and training, workshops, community interface solutions, awareness programmes or create an online presence for small businesses in the community.

As part of this module, the web development teams create a website to fit the “giving back” theme.

The website should inform the audience of the team’s involvement with the community.

On completion of their websites, groups submit a portfolio of evidence which includes (but is not limited to):

- Minutes of meetings
- Creative brief
- Flowcharts
- Storyboards
- Screenshots of web pages
- Groups will also be required to demonstrate their functional websites.

This is yet another way SPU engages with its local community.