



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY



e-BRIEF

JULY 2020

My first 100 days as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Sol Plaatje University coincided with the nation-wide lockdown in response to the **COVID-19** pandemic.

[READ MORE ►](#)

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

[READ MORE ►](#)

HEALTH & SAFETY AMIDST COVID-19

[READ MORE ►](#)

THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 ON MANDELA DAY

[READ MORE ►](#)

TRACKING THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COVID-19

[READ MORE ►](#)

LIFE DURING LOCK DOWN

[READ MORE ►](#)

SPU STUDENTS GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITIES DURING LOCKDOWN

[READ MORE ►](#)

SHOPRITE HOLDINGS AWARDS BURSARY

[READ MORE ►](#)

SPU TO HOST 2020 2nd IMITEC CONFERENCE

[READ MORE ►](#)

SPU STUDENTPRENEURS SELECTED TO COMPETE AT REGIONALS

[READ MORE ►](#)

SPECIAL FEATURE: CREATIVE WRITING

[READ MORE ►](#)

NEW EMPLOYEES

[READ MORE ►](#)

sports CANCELLED FOR 2020

[READ MORE ►](#)



MESSAGES FROM
**HEADS OF
SCHOOLS**



[READ MORE ►](#)

Contributions, comments and suggestions are welcome and these can be sent to mosima.mehlape@spu.ac.za
The next edition is due out in September 2020.

Editor: Mosima Mehlape

SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

MOVING TOWARDS A NEW NORM

"My first 100 days as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Sol Plaatje University coincided with the nation-wide lockdown in response to the **COVID-19** pandemic. It has been a difficult and challenging time for the entire SPU community and I want to thank each of you for your commitment to keeping the University operational during this period."



I want to acknowledge that many people in the SPU community are experiencing difficult circumstances. As Vice-Chancellor I want to extend my support to you. Please make use of the avenues that we have established for staff and student psycho-social support. Take care of your mental and physical well-being and that of your families.

We have managed to successfully maintain our academic programme, which is quite an achievement for a young university like SPU. I am happy to report that we are on track to complete the academic year in 2020.

However, we should be prepared for national directives and changing circumstances that could result in us extending this academic year into 2021.

We are slowly moving towards a "new" normality and a few of our

staff and students have already returned to campus. I will keep you informed about plans for when more staff and students will be able to come back to campus.

We have over the last few weeks also began to normalise our processes and as a result I am able to congratulate Ms Ntesang Makutu on her election as the first female SRC President at SPU. Our normal governance processes have continued under this new norm and I am starting to interact with our partners and donors to ensure that we keep our relationships going.

I am looking for opportunities to engage with the wider University community at which I will present my vision for the next few years.

I am hopeful that conditions will allow for this to take place in the near future. Until then, I look forward to continuing to work with you on advancing the SPU project.

Professor Andrew Crouch Vice-Chancellor and Principal



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR MARY JEAN BAXEN, DVC: ACADEMIC

1. How has COVID-19 impacted teaching and learning at SPU?

COVID-19 placed enormous pressure on the academic year. We needed to do everything we could to rescue the 2020 academic year and thus, had to prepare for a transition to online teaching and learning in a short space of time.

This meant training all staff to ensure their preparedness to completely transition onto an online learning and teaching platform. Such a transition required staff to understand digital pedagogies, augment their planning as well as review their assessment strategies.

We planned an intensive induction programme for students where they were not only introduced to online learning but also provided with self-directed learning as well as psychosocial strategies to cope in this new environment. Ongoing psychosocial support is being provided through a psychosocial support programme, coordinated and managed by Student Affairs.

Critical in all of this was: (a) ensuring access to resources for students and staff, (b) revision of the academic calendar, which was approved by the University Senate on 21 April 2020, (c) understanding the contextual realities of students with a view to being responsive to their learning needs and (d) continued monitoring of online learning and teaching.

2. How has COVID-19 affected academics and student productivity? What measures were put in place to circumvent and assist with this?

The lockdown was sudden and has continued for longer than anticipated. Uncertainty brings with it anxiety that can negatively impact one's mental health.

The higher education sector has had to spotlight mental health as an important ingredient in its management of the pandemic, with SPU being no exception. Lack of proximity and access to support has resulted in an increase in mental health cases amongst our students. Student Affairs established partnerships with health practitioners in areas where students find themselves, to mitigate this. Staff are also provided with psycho-social support services offered by the university during this time.

3. With the country in Level 3 of the national lockdown which allows final year students and those graduating in 2020 to return to campus, how will SPU adjust its teaching and learning methods to accommodate both on-campus and off-campus students?

A decision was reached by the Senior Management Team that online learning and teaching will continue for the first semester, with modalities for the second semester dependent on national lockdown imperatives.

During lockdown Level 3, a phased return of some students was followed whereby a small number has returned to campus in line with strict health and safety protocols. The first cohort comprised final year students requiring access to laboratories and technical equipment.

4. As this pandemic poses numerous obstacles for the higher education sector, is SPU prepared to tackle any challenges that may arise in the foreseeable future?

The transition to e-learning has not been easy but having tactfully adjusted to the current conditions within such a short space of time, we are certainly prepared to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate any changes that we may receive from national directives.

5. Final words regarding teaching and learning during this unprecedented time?

The shift from face-to-face to online teaching and learning has been complex and challenging but has also brought with it many exciting opportunities.

Engaging in digital pedagogies has raised new and interesting questions about the academic enterprise; importantly the teaching/learning nexus.

We are still gaining insight into the affordances and constraints of online teaching and learning to fully appreciate this complexity.

"I want to thank all academic staff for their commitment to ensuring that our students learn remotely and thank our students for staying the course with us on this journey during these unprecedented times."

HEALTH & SAFETY AMIDST COVID-19

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

THE MEASURES BELOW ARE IMPORTANT IN REDUCING
THE TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19.



Direct contact is being in proximity with others less than two meters apart for more than 15 minutes. Avoiding direct contact is important because when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus if the person has the disease.



Remember that **asymptomatic people** (those who are positive for COVID-19 but show no symptoms) **may also potentially spread the virus** to other people.



Always wear a cloth mask. Your mask should cover from the bridge of your nose to under your chin. Wash your mask daily with soap or detergent.



Avoid shaking hands, kissing, or sharing utensils.



Open windows in public transport or in rooms where there is a group of people.



Stay at home and **avoid social visits.**



Only go shopping when necessary.



Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds to kill the virus or use a **hand sanitiser** with an **alcohol content of 60%** and above.



Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.



Sanitise surfaces regularly as the COVID-19 virus can stay on surfaces for up to 72 hours.



Cough into your elbow or a tissue and then throw the tissue away in a bin. Sanitise or wash your hands again immediately afterward.

People at risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19 are those older than 65 years of age, and those with co-morbidities (diabetes, hypertension, HIV, uncontrolled asthma, and obesity).

I SUSPECT I HAVE COVID-19, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The known symptoms of COVID-19 include:

FEVER OF 38° OR HIGHER ○

LOSS OF SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE ○

DRY, CONTINUOUS COUGH ○

DIFFICULTY BREATHING ○

BODY ACHES ○



If you experience any of these symptoms, you should call your doctor, stay at home, and self-quarantine for 10 days. You must also inform your immediate supervisor at work.

THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 ON MANDELA DAY

This year the essence of Mandela Day is more significant than ever before as the world fights the spread of an unseen enemy – the coronavirus.

For Mandela Day this year, we look at Dr Garth Benneyworth's typed copy of Nelson Mandela's original handwritten journal and notes retrieved from the National Archives of South Africa as Nelson Mandela notes:

“The time comes in the life of a nation when there remain only two choices – submit or fight.”

This bold statement speaks directly to the current crisis that we live in. We cannot submit as our nation will perish. We can and must fight this pandemic by committing to acting responsibly in our lives and for the lives of those around us.

As we battle this pandemic let us assist those in need through donations of food items, clothing, or other essentials while adhering to the health and safety protocols.

Let's take care and stay safe.



MANDELA DAY TRIBUTE

HOPE IN A SONG

My cousin brother used to buy me the Sowetan newspaper Friday. He did so without fail.

“Mchana if you keep reading this way until you are old, you'll be something big in life. Maybe you'll become a teacher,” he used to say.

He liked Aggrey Klaaste, who was the editor of the Sowetan. Maybe he thought if I wasn't going to be a teacher when I grew up, I would be a journalist and be like Aggrey Klaaste.

Other children at school knew that I read the paper. Whenever we had homework that required us to cut out one thing or the other in the newspaper or magazine, they would come to me.

One Friday the Sowetan had, on the front page of its entertainment section, Sello Chicco Twala whose song “We miss you Manellow” I liked a lot. I liked that song not only because it was a wonderful sing-along that was played on radio all the time, but also because my cousin brother told me the musician simply replaced “Mandela” with “Manellow”. In fact when you listened to the lyrics, especially the chorus, the idea that “Manellow” was in the place of “Mandela” made sense.

We miss you Manellow
Where are you?
We miss you Manellow
Where are you?

The idea of having access to a song that could have been banned but was not, gave me satisfaction. I was happy that the apartheid regime was tricked and that the whole black population had a secret they did not share with white South Africans. If the cat was to get out of the bag the song would be banned immediately and anyone caught listening to it would be thrown in jail or if lucky, get a warm klap from a policeman.

We missed Mandela, whose face us youngsters did not know. Mandela was an idea, or rather the embodiment of our hope that freedom will one day become a reality. We danced to the song and got reminded that Mandela was in jail and had to come out.

Mr Sabata-mpho Mokae *School of Humanities*

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES USES PHYLOGENOMICS TO TRACK THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted health systems all over the world, resulting in the loss of many lives and destabilising economies.

Phylogenomic tracking of the pandemic represents one of the best ways to monitor the spread of COVID-19 in real-time. However, effective phylogenomic monitoring is dependent on a rich source of genomic datasets.

Dr Adekunle Adebowale and Ms Precious Letebele from the department of Biological and Agricultural Sciences performed a phylogenetic analysis on SARS-CoV-2 (Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) genome data for the African continent to illustrate the spread of the pandemic.



Africa's contribution to the SARS-CoV-2 genome data stands at about 1% of the global total, with only six countries currently represented.

73% of the data comes from Egypt, while South Africa, with the highest number of reported COVID-19 cases on the continent, has only one available genome sequence on the NCBI database.

Due to the massive data gap, this analysis did not uncover a reliable evolutionary pattern for the virus. However, Dr Adebowale and Ms Letebele identified significant incongruences in the timing of sampling and placement of sequence on the inferred phylogeny.

It is assumed that the source of incongruence is due to a

probable discrepancy between sample collection and sequence generation, leading to phylogenetic placements that violate the basic rule of molecular evolutionary progression.

Consequently, they propose the rapid processing of samples destined for sequencing as soon as they are collected, as Africa gradually increases its SARS-CoV-2 genomic footprint.

LIFE DURING LOCKDOWN AND WHAT I LEARNT FROM IT

MY CORONA BLUES

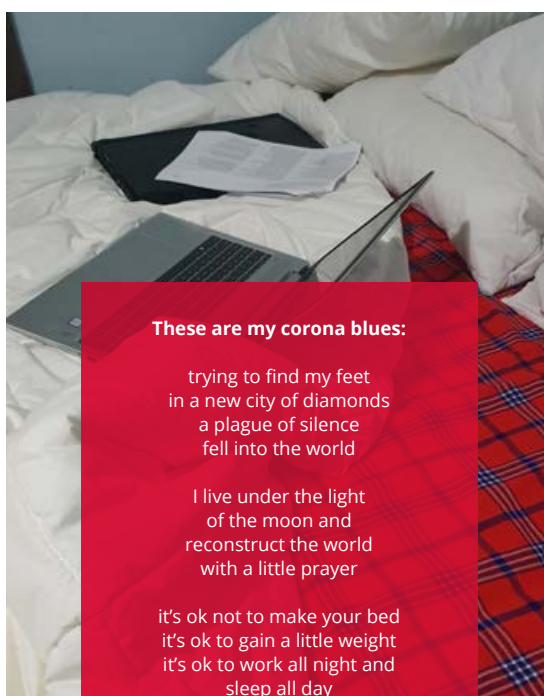
The lockdown began just as I entered my fifth month of employment at SPU and I was still trying to find my feet. This was a challenging time for me being locked down away from home and family.

The corona blues pushed me to a place of reflection personally, academically, and as a South African citizen.

I spent time with my laptop and books as a way of survival; I updated my 6-year plan, attended CTLPD workshops, did research on an article, organized a creative writing workshop, performed poetry on social media and hosted an international webinar with academics, writers and artists to commemorate the spirit of June 16, 1976. The normal way of life was shaken.

Ms Sizakele (Nkosi) Mokhele

Lecturer: Creative Writing



COVI COVI

Never in the history of my life have I seen people so confused. When the first case of COVID-19 was announced in South Africa, myths started flying around:

- Blacks are immune to COVID-19,
- COVID-19 came as a result of the 5G,
- Pastors said people shouldn't take the vaccine as the government was planting a microchip to track our movements,
- It also didn't help that the government was playing their cards close to their chest about this pandemic.

Covi Covi (as it is famously known in the township) confusion led to so much stress and anxiety. I couldn't keep a clear head without thinking about the possibilities of being infected. It was all I thought about. My brats, what if they get infected.

As a result, it was difficult to focus, my mind was working overtime, I felt I needed something sustainable to keep my sanity in place.

Online opportunities from other institutions didn't help as I would be occupied for about 30 to 45 minutes at a time. Churches were closed too, so no fellowshipping and gaining much-needed strength from fellow believers.

This pandemic taught me to value the little things. I realised that life is not only valuable but also very short. One moment I am healthy and well, the next I could be in a hospital bed fighting for my life.

As we move on, there will be doors of opportunities that will open. It will be foolish of us if we return to the old way of doing things. We must always remember that when we had our backs against the wall, we strived to succeed, and that should drive us to continue beyond it.



"The hardship will last for a short while. If we keep safe and obey all the regulations, soon this too shall pass."

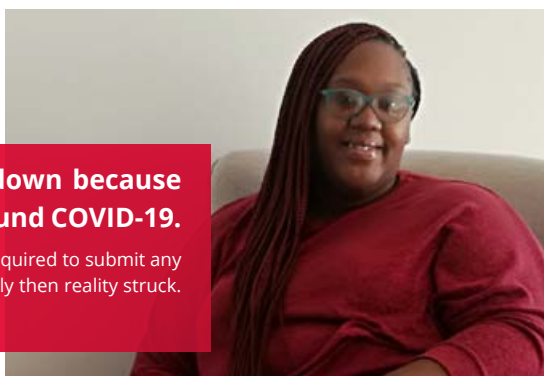
Mr Jabu (JR) Radebe

Information Librarian: HUM and NAS

LOCKDOWN WAS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED

In the beginning, I was excited about lockdown because my mind had not fully grasped the issue around COVID-19.

All I could think about then was not having classes and not being required to submit any work. As the days progressed and restrictions were announced, only then reality struck. The severity of COVID-19 became apparent.



I was in Johannesburg with my grandmother and aunt, who are both above 65 years of age. I was the only one responsible for all household chores and running all errands. I had to take extra precautions wherever I went as both family members had comorbidities.

I later learned that we would begin online learning, and honestly, this was very challenging. I had to navigate an unknown territory while at home without my peers, it seemed bleak at first, but this was a reality I had to adapt quickly to.

On a positive note, being with family allowed me to bridge the gap

with the older generation through conversations that we wouldn't ordinarily have. I now appreciate them more and value the gift of life.

2020 has been a year of uncertainty, and my view of the world has changed.

I have learned resilience and independence in my thinking as I overcame challenges yet still pursued greatness.

Ms Khanyisile Nkonyane

Student: Bachelor of Commerce

ADAPTING TO CHANGE IS KEY

This pandemic came as a shock, like a thief in the night while asleep. Yes, we are locked down, but our lives are not on hold.

I have used this time for therapy and self-help. My reading hobby was awakened. I read books that restored my mind and aided my emotional well-being. I realised how powerful self-care and love is. I have learned how beautiful I am inside and out, and I look at myself differently now.

Spending quality time with my family is priceless, as I was reminded of my parents' value in my life. I drew strength from them and appreciate them even more.

I also began to empower myself spiritually by praying and reading my bible.

Lecturers and students are not leaving any stone unturned so that we do not waste time sitting idle. Beginning with online classes was a challenge for all of us - we quickly adapted so that our academic paths do not get affected.

This taught me to never run away from obstacles when life throws them at you. Learn to adapt to the situation. Even with the limited resources, this journey proved that anything can be done if we put in the effort and push harder.



My ultimate lesson is that we must adapt to positive and innovative thinking during the challenges we face in life.

Ms Naledi Mothate

Student: Diploma in ICT (Applications Development)

SPU STUDENTS GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITIES DURING LOCKDOWN

“I KNOW WHAT IT’S LIKE TO HAVE NOTHING.”

Period poverty, which refers to a lack of access to sanitary protection, continues to be a debilitating concern - especially for a developing country such as South Africa.

However, Vanessa Madito, a first-year Heritage Studies student at SPU, managed to make a difference to reduce period poverty in her society during the national lockdown.

After seeing that many girls in her community could not afford to buy sanitary towels, Madito started a pad initiative by using a portion of her student allowance to buy sanitary pads for girls in Schweizer-Reneke who could not afford them.

Vanessa lost her mother at a very young age. She recalls “I know what it’s like to wake up in the morning with no food, go to school on an empty stomach plus you are on your cycle.” Remembering this painful experience made it necessary that she helps those who may be going through the same.

“I didn’t want girls to use unhygienic cloths that can cause infection, so I decided to use part of my monthly allowance to help,” says Madito. “The lack of menstrual hygiene products inflicts indignity upon disadvantaged young girls, as sanitary pads are expensive,” concludes Madito.



Helping others makes her happy. This has made her turn a time of uncertainty into a time of giving hope to young girls and inspiring others to do the same in their communities.



#BREADCHALLENGE DRIVES WOLMARANSSTAD SOUP KITCHEN

Buza Ndebele, a second-year BEd student at SPU, started a Facebook and WhatsApp challenge using the #breadchallenge during the national lockdown that turned into a community benefit project aimed at feeding the underprivileged community of Wolmaransstad.

“We have a lot of impoverished people in Wolmaransstad, I wanted to help my community during this time while I was at home,” says Ndebele.

Ndebele invited his childhood friends who were all home during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist him in starting up a soup kitchen that would feed children from poverty-stricken families, the elderly, and unemployed youth.

“Although I grew up in extreme poverty, it was great growing up in Wolmaransstad. Many of our community members cannot reach their full potential due to the underdeveloped city infrastructure that could benefit them to live healthy, productive and fulfilling lives,” said Ndebele. “This soup kitchen is just the start of my bigger plans to uplift my community,” concludes Ndebele.

Today the #breadchallenge has turned into a Wolmaransstad community benefit project that also collects and distributes winter clothes for the less fortunate through generous donations from members of the community.

SHOPRITE HOLDINGS AWARDS BURSARY TO RETAIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDENT

The Shoprite Holdings bursary aims at attracting and funding future Trainee Retail Managers who want to follow an exciting management career at the largest retailer in Africa.

The funding is a steppingstone into the company and guarantees candidate's employment upon the successful completion of their course.

After undergoing a rigorous selection process, three SPU students were invited for face-to-face interviews. Of the three, Ms Nozuko Pike was the only successful candidate for the first intake of 2020.

"I'm honoured to be granted the Shoprite bursary for 2020. The bursary provides me an opportunity to complete my studies, and to immerse myself fully in them without worrying about financial constraints."

"I am excited that upon completion of my studies, I am guaranteed permanent employment with Shoprite and will apply the theory learned in class practically. I am certainly looking forward to the future with the biggest retailer in Africa," said Ms Pike.



Ms Pike is the tenth SPU student to be funded by Shoprite Holdings. This indicates that Shoprite Holdings has recognised SPU as an institution of choice to fund and employ students studying for the Diploma in Retail Business Management.



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2020

e-BRIEF

SPU TO HOST THE 2020 2nd IMITEC CONFERENCE

SPU's School of Natural and Applied Sciences will host the 2020 2nd IMITEC conference from 25 to 27 November 2020.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Computer Society, IEEE South Africa Computer Society Chapter, and the IEEE Technical Committee on Data Engineering.

The theme of the conference is **"From Kilobyte to Exabyte"** and a majority of articles will focus on finding data-driven solutions to data-congested environments towards preventing undesirable consequences of misinformation on human life.

The conference has attracted over ninety paper submissions from around the world.

To cater to a broad audience, the 2020 2nd IMITEC conference will encompass preliminary workshops on cutting-edge topics in data engineering, research paper sessions, and three keynote addresses by internationally recognized senior researchers in the theme areas of the conference. Online streamed presentations and forum discussions will dominate the sessions.

The conference promises to be a high-quality international platform that brings together researchers and practitioners from academia and industry to discuss cutting-edge research on computer science, data science, computational mathematics, computational physics, computational biology, and ICT.



SCHOOL OF
NATURAL &
APPLIED SCIENCES

◀ GO BACK

FIVE SPU STUDENTPRENEURS SELECTED TO COMPETE AT REGIONALS

The Annual National Intervarsity Student Entrepreneurship Competition is a competition hosted by the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) across all 26 South African universities.

The purpose of this competition is to identify top student entrepreneurs at South African public universities to recognize and showcase their businesses and to invite investment into this cohort of student businesses.

In February 2020, studentpreneurs were invited to enter and pitch their businesses across four categories: New Business Idea; Existing Business: Technology; Existing Business: Social Impact, and Existing Business: General. This year's winner will walk away with the ultimate prize money of R100 000.

SPU received 51 applications this year, compared to last year's two applications, and 16 studentpreneurs were selected to pitch their business ideas to the judges at the SPU internal rounds.

OUT OF THE 16, 5 STUDENTPRENEURS WERE SELECTED TO REPRESENT SPU AT THE REGIONAL ROUNDS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 27 TO 31 JULY 2020.

SPU will compete against the Central University of Technology, University of the Free State, Vaal University of Technology, and the North West University.

In 2019, one of the two SPU applicants made it to the national rounds. This is certainly an achievement to be proud of.

The School of Economic and Management Sciences is hopeful that, once again, our students will fly the SPU flag high at this year's competition.



1ST PLACE
**LEBANG
MAKHUTLE**
Bendel Community Recycling
EXISTING BUSINESS - SOCIAL IMPACT CATEGORY



1ST PLACE
**CHAD
LUCAS**
Chowders
NEW BUSINESS IDEA CATEGORY



1ST PLACE
**ROMONDO
FOSTER**
BossCutz Barbershop
EXISTING BUSINESS - GENERAL BUSINESS CATEGORY



2ND PLACE
**SHANTANISE
BOTES**
Ottillia Photography
EXISTING BUSINESS - GENERAL BUSINESS CATEGORY



2ND PLACE
**PAKO
RAMOGOGANE**
Campus Driving School
NEW BUSINESS IDEA CATEGORY

SPECIAL FEATURE: CREATIVE WRITING

SPU's Creative Writing department hosted a three-day Creative Writing Workshop for academic staff on 1, 2 and 8 July 2020.

The workshop was facilitated by Robert Berold, who is a South African poet, publisher, and designer/instructor at Rhodes University's Creative Writing MA programme.

At this hands-on virtual workshop, attendees were taken through the creative writing process from start to finish.

A highly energetic group of SPU academics attended the workshop. From those that participated, seven attendees submitted their final writing piece that focused on different writing prompts. Some of the work is featured below:



I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK

This morning I had boiled water with 2g of vitamin C. Ever since my experience with XDR-TB, I have vouched to take vitamin C daily, especially in winter. I have been prone to colds and flu every winter before that. I knew that in May of every year I would catch a flu that will last me until late October or mid-November. Ever since I started taking vit C, I have been free of winter flu. I don't want to go back.

I remember the night the symptoms made an announcement. Like a mother carrying her beloved child, I was carrying an iceberg on my back. Yet in the palpable darkness of midnight, I was drenched from my head to my toe as though I had been castrating a cat.

I remember the first night in hospital. The Grim Reaper reaped four fellow peers and sent a loud message to me – I am coming for you too. How shall I escape? He continued his monthly visits and the message grew was like syncopated laughter of demons.

I remember the smell of clarithromycin, an antibiotic I used for XDR-TB. It smelled like custard, but the moment that smell attended my nose, my stomach responded with a turbulence that chased everything I ate up the same way it came down. I can almost see myself bowing down in submission after a fruitless fight not to throw up. My day would be ruined and fears of not being cured would flood my mind and leave me anxious for days.

I remember the side effects of clofazimine. My skin turned red, brown and black as clofazimine oozed from my pores. My yellow-bonish status complained like an unsatisfied girlfriend and left me. I was a shadow of what I used to be. I was smelly and that meant no more hugs, I have to distance myself. Really now?

I remember my peers not a hearing a thing said and some seeing what we could not see because of the drugs we were taking. Oh! Is this how it's gonna be? Before this monster kill me, I will be deaf and start hallucinating! What shall I do? Is there a way of escape? Must I stop taking them? NO! I won't stop! Oh LORD, show me the way! Save me!

I asked my peers; is there no herb GOD planted in this forest that can help with this TB? I found none there, yet I discovered Plantain herb. I chew some garlic as I kept warm in winter. I drank some Mullein, some Horsetail and the Greater Plantain as tea while I continued with my treatment.

I finished the treatment, but I continue with my herbs and my morning dose of Vitamin C. Because I don't want to go back.

Lukhanyo E. Makhanyane
School of Education

HOUSES

what I remember about Nonhlanhla's house
is that their gate was always locked;
later in the years, they installed a camera
and an intercom system

Maseru's house smelled of ice –
a mixture of sugar and sixo
cabbage and amazimba from
the mini fruit & veg spaza-shop

ijaridi lakaboNtsumpa had tall grass
growing between ipaving
and there was always mud in that yard
from a burst pipe

as a child
I used to notice peoples' kitchens –
if or not there were dishes in the sink
or izimfaduko eziclean

mama and gogo's bedrooms both have
ikhosomba – a thin corner between
the wall and wardrobe that stashes
thngs from umbrellas to blankets

and ilathi – a prayer table with the virgin mary,
a candle, a flower, a glow in the dark rosary

Siza Nkosi Mokhele
School of Humanities

PERFUME

I used to try to persuade mama to buy her perfume at the store that puts fragrances in generic bottles. Much cheaper but the same thing. Mama would have none of it. She was like that. Had class and expensive taste. And the way she loved clothes! It was a wonder her wardrobes did not collapse under the weight of them. When we were packing up mama's clothes after her passing, my sister burst out laughing "my mother has not 1, not 2, not 3 but 10 red jackets." Mama looked so understatedly elegant in her jeans, black turtle neck and red jacket. Always with a scarf. Like a millionaire. My sister and I could never emulate her style and class.

Mama never stopped reminding us to be grateful for the little and the big things. She used to say, "Gratitude is riches. Complaint is poverty." For years I wrote gratitude pages, and sometimes still do. But for mama, it was a habit she inhabited, an altitude at which she lived. A higher frequency. After her passing I wore her sweaters and remember the smell of her musky perfume lingering on them. Gently, after each wearing and washing, it wore off. It is gone now.

I used to wear a sweet floral perfume, can't remember the name. Later, when I returned to singlehood – and in honour of it, I switched to a more musky fragrance, Narciso Rodriguez. Am I narcissistic – probably. I really enjoyed this perfume. Was proudly self-conscious about it when I would hug someone. It made me feel womanly, desirable.

Then came the time in my life when I could no longer afford my monthly car payment, never mind luxuries like perfume – and, over time, I resigned myself to just being clean and presentable. I made a conscious decision to cultivate the "the perfume of gratitude" mama exuded. The more subtle and muted fragrance of body lotion ever so perceptible on my skin, is all I need. I don't feel less womanly or desirable.

Karen Haire
School of Humanities

HER SANCTUARY

white zinc cupboards
the room small perhaps 6x5m
windows covered with floral curtains
traditional windows from the 90s
which open to the outside

a few cms below the window
is a silver zinc single sink with two taps
but only one works
next to the sink is dishwashing liquid
and a scotchrite yellow and green sponge

a meter from the sink is a big white fridge
the tiles on the floor are faded
on the cupboard top is a kettle
microwave, mug stand
and a modern built-in stove

she is very meticulous, even in her old age
no one is allowed to sleep
if there is a dirty plate in the sink
she spends her days here
cooking baking and cleaning

one time i found her crying
she was missing him
fifteen years later
it was as if she just heard the news

sometimes her arthritic hands shake
revealing the years
of cleaning in the suburbs
they called her Velemina

she loved them nonetheless
if she had come home early – that day –
she would have closed his eyes
they asked her to stay longer
to wash the dishes

she mixes the dough
pours the oil in the pan
the smell fills up the room
vetkoek and mince
our favourite

Lesego Bertha Kgatitswe
School of Humanities

SPU's 2020 NEW EMPLOYEES

ACADEMIC



Professor Pierre Joubert

Head of School: Economic and Management Sciences

Prof Joubert holds a PhD in Industrial Sociology and is the Head of the School of Economic and Management Sciences. He spent the past 32 years in higher education in various capacities and has published numerous articles in research journals, acts as editor/ reviewer for journals, is an external examiner/moderator for numerous universities, presented several papers at national and international conferences and supervised a large number of students on masters and doctorate level. He is a board member of the SA Board for People Practice and a Master HR Practitioner.



Adesuwa Vanessa Agbedahin

Programme Manager: Academic Staff Career Path Development

Prior to joining SPU, Ms Agbedahin was an independent social research consultant and postdoctoral research fellow at the University of the Free State and Rhodes University. She holds a PhD, Masters, and certificate in Environment and Sustainability (Higher) Education from Rhodes University. She holds a Diploma and Bachelors (Hons) in Education of the Hearing Impaired from the Federal College of Education (Special) and University of Jos, Nigeria, respectively. She is a reviewer of four academic journals and has supervised two PhD students. She has been an individual specialist and author for the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris. She has also served as an independent lead research consultant for the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York.



Ms Cecilia Nomalanga Mashibini

Lecturer: Languages and Communication

Ms Mashibini is a Lecturer in Interpreting & Translation and teaches Interpreting and Theory of law for court interpreters. She is a language practitioner specialising in interpreting and translation. She holds a Diploma in Legal Interpreting obtained from the University of Potchefstroom in 2001 and a BA Hons Language Practice obtained from the University of the Free State in 2012. Before she joined SPU in 2020, she was employed at the Department of Justice & Constitutional Development as the Provincial Manager, NC: Court Interpreting. She is presently enrolled and studying towards MA (Language practice) at the University of the Free State.



Ms Mmatlou Jerida Malatji

Lecturer: Languages and Communication

Born and raised in the Limpopo Province, in a village called Nobody, Ms Malatji is currently working on her PhD research proposal with a special focus on Language Policy and Planning. Before joining SPU in 2020, Ms Malatji was a Research Assistant at the University of Limpopo where she had also registered for her PhD. She currently lectures courses on Interpreting Liaison Contexts, English Communication Skills for Interpreters and Legal English. Qualifications: BA Degree, Hon. Degree in Translation Studies and Linguistics and MA in Translation Studies and Linguistics- University of Limpopo.



Dr Osayuwamen Omoruyi

Senior Lecturer: Accounting and Economics

Dr Omoruyi was born in Nigeria. In 2005 she registered with the Vaal University of Technology in the field of logistics. In 2008 she obtained a Bachelor of Technology in Logistics and was appointed to a tutor position, then to a junior lecturer position in 2010. She completed her Master's degree in Logistics at VUT in 2011 and later completed her Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education through the University of Free State. In 2013, she obtained a scholarship by Banden-Wurttemberg Foundation and Aalen University of Applied Sciences, Germany.

Dr Omoruyi graduated with a Doctor of Business degree in the Faculty of Management Science from VUT in 2016 and was promoted to a senior lecturer where she taught both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dr Omoruyi is a qualified researcher who is very competent in Logistics and Supply Chain area of research and has published several research papers in scientific journals and international conference proceedings.



Professor MD. Humayun Kabir

Associate Professor: Accounting and Economics

Professor Kabir received his MBA degree in Accounting and BBA Honours degree in Accounting from University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, and his PhD degree with a research focus in an accounting area from North-West University.

Professor Kabir has 22 years of university teaching, research and administrative experience including serving on various committees in several institutions (Durban University of Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Swaziland and University of Botswana) and has more than five years' industry experience.

Professor Kabir has also served as Deputy Chair on the Mpumalanga Provincial Government Research Ethics Committee from 2016 to 2017. He was a Chairperson of Audit and Risk Committee of Thaba Chweu Local Economic Development Agency, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa from 2013 to 2018. Professor Kabir is an external examiner and moderator for postgraduate programmes for several local and international universities. Professor Kabir is a member of many international professional bodies including the British Academy of Management (UK), Australian Academy of Business Leadership (Australia) and Swaziland Institute of Accountants (Swaziland).



Professor Nhamo Chaukura

Associate Professor: Physical and Earth Sciences

Professor Chaukura studied for a BSc (Honours) Chemistry (1994) and MSc in Analytical Chemistry (1998) at the University of Zimbabwe. He further obtained an MA in Educational Studies from the University of Sheffield (2008), and a PhD in Materials Chemistry from the University of Manchester (2011) in England. He was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of South Africa (2016-2018), was appointed a Senior Lecturer at Harare Institute of Technology, and later moved to Bindura University of Science Education as an Associate Professor of Chemistry.

He has supervised and mentored research students at UNISA, Bindura University of Science Education, and co-supervise research students at the University of Zimbabwe. His research involves analytical chemistry techniques, the design, fabrication, characterisation, and evaluation of various low-cost materials for water treatment over 40 publications in peer-reviewed journals.



Dr Edmore Chitukutuku

Lecturer: Social Sciences

Dr Chitukutuku is an anthropologist whose research focuses on violence, conflict and peacebuilding in Africa. His primary research focused on state sponsored political violence in southern and northern Zimbabwe, by looking at the historical ethnography of the liberation war and coteremporary youth militia bases. An article titled, *Rebuilding the liberation war base: materiality and landscapes of violence in northern Zimbabwe*, was published from this work. He has explored questions to do with gender dimensions of violence, the military and its role in violence, and peacebuilding looking at the strategies that communities use to work through the traumatic experiences of violence. From these questions an article titled, *Spiritual temporalities of the liberation war in Zimbabwe*, was published. His interests also include urban and economic anthropology, policing, security and military studies.



Dr Karthigasen Gopalan

Senior Lecturer: Social Sciences

Dr Gopalan worked at the University of Fort Hare (from 2016) where he served as lecturer and Deputy Head of Department for History, and the University of KwaZulu Natal where he served as lecturer in the History Department and History Education. He completed his PhD at the University of KwaZulu Natal in 2016. His early research aimed to add to our understanding of transcontinental exchanges amongst displaced migrants during the early twentieth century, by looking specifically at the role of Hindu reformed movements, and how these were communicated, experienced, interpreted and negotiated in different social settings. More recently he has written about forced relocations during the implementation of Apartheid Government's Group Areas Act, by looking at how specific communities responded to the laws imposed upon them and the meanings that this history has on them in the present. He has also looked at the paradox of community leaders in a township after the Group Areas Act, who were willing to work with apartheid structures, and are consequently viewed as collaborators with the apartheid regime.



Professor Olugbenga Oluwagbemi

Associate Professor: Computer Science and Information Technology

Professor Oluwagbemi obtained his B.Sc degree in Computer Science from the University of Ilorin. He obtained his M.Sc degree in Computer Science from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He also won the Fulbright Summer Scholarship to participate in a summer program in the Rochester Institute of Technology, USA.

He undertook his PhD coursework at Covenant University but later won a Fulbright Fellowship to the USA, to conduct his PhD research at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. He received his PhD in 2013 from Covenant University. He is currently a DAAD Research Fellow running a DAAD personal research grant in South Africa, which he won from Germany. His research interests are in artificial intelligence in health, informatics in health, computational modelling, machine learning, bioinformatics and computer aided diagnosis.

SPU's 2020 NEW EMPLOYEES

ADMINISTRATION



Teboho Motumi

Officer: Payroll

Teboho hails from Thaba Nchu and his work experience includes working as a Debt collector, a Telesales Agent, a Sales representative, a Senior Administrative Officer and a Payroll Officer at the Central University of Technology for more than 10 years. His qualifications include a National Diploma in Office Management and a BTech degree in Project Management from the Central University of Technology. He is currently enrolled for a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration at the University of Free State.



Chane Kruger

Manager: HR Development

Chane describes herself as a child of the Northern Cape and with roots in the Karoo, as she was raised on a farm in Strydenburg. She studied at the University of Free State and completed her BPL degree and started working in the banking industry. She then completed her BCom Honours degree in Industrial Psychology through UNISA and has worked for the majority of her career in the mining industry at De Beers Consolidated Mines, Kimberley.

She has worked within various sections in HR at De Beers in different mines. She is happily married to the biggest Blue Bull Supporter and is a mother to two sons. She looks forward to assisting the SPU community in organizational improvements across all departments by evaluating and identifying opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness.



Faye Nicole Goa

Administrator: Payments and Creditors

Faye was born and raised in Kimberley. She studied Financial Management (N4-N6) at Northern Cape FET College.

She worked at Kew Foundries in 2007 in the Finance division but later resigned to start her own business before being appointed at SPU.



Crescentia Kortman

Administrator: SCM - Purchasing

Crescentia is from Kimberley and studied Financial Management (N4-N6) at the TVET college in Kimberley. She also completed her 18 months internship programme.



Nonqaba Litabe

Library Administrator: Circulation

Nonqaba was born in Mdantsane, East London. She attended local schools in Mdantsane and matriculated at S.E.K. Mqhayi High School, and furthered her studies at East London College where she obtained an N6 Certificate in Management Assistance.

In 2007, she joined Walter Sisulu University of Technology as a contract worker in the Finance Department which led to a permanent position as a Library Assistant. She left WSU in March 2011 and joined Central University of Technology for a similar position. In 2013 she enrolled for a National Diploma in Human Resources Management and graduated in March 2016. She further obtained a BTech in Human Resources Management.



Ipeleng Charles

Officer: HR

Ipeleng is an experienced Human Resources Generalist with a demonstrated history of working in the accounting industry. She is skilled in Human Capital Management, Recruitment, Onboarding, HR Consulting, Talent Management, Performance Management, and Industrial Relations. She obtained her BTech degree in Human Resources Management from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and registered as a Human Resources Professional with the SABPP. She is from Kimberley and is excited about her new role at the University.



Tshepiso Makhoro

Officer: Internal Audit

Tshepiso recently joined the Internal Auditing team as an Officer: Internal Audit. He hails from Gauteng and holds a National Diploma and B-Tech degree in Internal Auditing obtained at the Vaal University of Technology. He also has an N6 in Business Management. Tshepiso describes himself as an energetic and hard-working individual who possess strong organisational skills. He's very optimistic and very committed and is looking forward to taking on new challenges, getting better insight, gaining professional growth and adding value to projects.



Kgasane Seemela

Librarian: Information

Kgasane Seemela is currently an Information Librarian in the Library and Information Services. He is currently allocated to the School of Economic and Management Sciences and School of Education as the Information liaison. Prior to this, he worked at SABINET, where he served as a Product Trainer responsible for training facilitation on SABINET library Databases for all SABINET clients in Africa. He holds a Bachelor of Information Studies degree and he is currently pursuing his Master's Degree in Information Science.



Nokulunga S'phelelisiwe Dlakude

Library Administrator: Circulation

Nokulunga S'phelelisiwe Dlakude was born and raised in Olundi, KwaZulu Natal and holds a Bachelor's degree in Information Science from the University of Zululand. She loves reading and interacting with people which led her to this profession. The corona virus crisis has given rise to a paradigm shift in the circulation and access to print collection. E-services is the new normal to support our students.



Didimalang Ratikoane

Officer: Project Accounting

Didimalang Ratikoane was born and raised in Kimberley. She studied BCom Accounting at the University of the Free State and completed her SAICA articles with PwC. She is a qualified Professional Accountant and is registered with the South African Institute for Professional Accountants.



Leroy Mojanaga

Administrator: Network

Leroy Mojanaga was born in Kimberley and completed his high school at St. Boniface High School. He furthered his studies at Torque IT and obtained a System Support Qualification. He started working as a Desktop Technician at MUSTEK in 2008 where he was later retrenched. He was then employed as a System Engineer at Sithabile Technology in 2010 and later relocated to Cape Town in 2017 where he worked as a Network Administrator at Rovic Leers.



Marinda Bezuidenhout

Financial Manager: Cost Management

Marinda Bezuidenhout, a Chartered Accountant (SA), obtained her BCom and BCom honours (CTA) from the University of Pretoria. She was an auditor at PricewaterhouseCoopers before moving to Hotazel where she was responsible for financial reporting of the BHP Billiton mines and gained extensive experience in financial reporting and consolidation. In 2019 Marinda returned to Kimberley where her grandfather played rugby for the Griquas. Marinda was a Financial Controller at the Lutzville Engineering (Pty) Ltd Group before her appointment at SPU.



Nkagisang Ditira

Officer: HR Development

Nkagisang Ditira was born in Schweizer-Reneke in 1976, and lived there until December 1990. He then moved to Wolmaransstad in 1991 where he has lived with his family.

He obtained a National Diploma in Human Resource Management at Hillside View Technical College in Bloemfontein followed by a BTech in Human Resource Management in 2012.

He has worked as a Chief Personnel Officer at Nic Bodenstein Hospital overseeing General Human Resource functions before being promoted to the position of Assistant Director: Employment Equity, at the Department of Health. He later moved to a position at Suidwes Landbou but was retrenched in April 2018.



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2020

e-BRIEF

SPU SPORTS CANCELLED FOR 2020

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of University Sports South Africa (USSA) has announced that all university sports tournaments scheduled to take place in 2020 are now cancelled.

“The decision of the USSA NEC to cancel all institutional sports tournaments for 2020 is disappointing, however we have to obey government regulations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This has had an enormous impact on our annual sports calendar and unfortunately all our sports programmes and projects have been placed on hold until further notice.”

– Mr Tshepo Maseou, SPU Sports Organiser



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

sports
CANCELLED
FOR 2020

◀ GO BACK



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2020

e-BRIEF



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Economic and Management Sciences

The current lockdown poses huge challenges, opportunities and risks for both staff and students of the School of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS).

Teaching, learning and assessment methods were adapted and the School reached out to all its students to ensure they are not left behind. Relatively low attendance/presence/participation rates of students are a major concern and we are in the process of preparing study material in hard copy and/or memory stick to be delivered to students who encounter difficulties to participate in online learning.

Fortunately submission rates of assessments are substantially higher than attendance rates and the School is positive that it will conclude the academic programme of the semester successfully for the majority of our students. The final year BCom students returned to campus and teaching and assessment plans are being adjusted to accommodate them.

I wish to commend all staff of the School for going the extra mile by attending numerous training events, learning new skills, developing virtual content and assessments etc. Your efforts are recognised and highly appreciated.



Prof Pierre Joubert, Head of the School of Economic and Management Sciences

Lastly, the patience, creativity and adaptability of our students gives us — hope that all our efforts will not be in vain and that we will fully adapt to and embrace the new normal.



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Education

The School of Education has since 18 May 2020 participated in the University's drive to recover the academic programme for 2020 through online teaching and learning.

This is a new way of teaching and learning for both staff and students and like anything new there have been various challenges which the University has continued to help Schools address. However, there have also been successes.

We have seen staff and students cautiously explore new ways of engaging; some putting to use technological skills that they already possessed but had not imagined their value for teaching and learning; others, particularly those of us the so called "digital immigrants" daring to venture out of our comfort zones to learn the skills.

It is a journey of joint learning for students, academics and management. We acknowledge that this is a turbulent time, but we view it as a transition.

Education will never be the same post-COVID-19 and together we are finding our collective "new norm".

As we prepare to receive our Final year students back on campus in the 2nd Semester, we continue to find ways to ensure that they complete their degrees in this academic year. We will also continue to support those final year students who for health reasons cannot come back to campus.



Prof Audrey Msimanga, Head of the School of Education

We urge all students to keep in touch through the School Registrar's office. Do not struggle alone, we are in this together. We wish all our staff and students strength, good health and success with the academic project. SPU School of Education, doing education with pride!



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2020

e-BRIEF



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Humanities

The first semester of 2020 has been one of the most challenging as the whole world faced the dangers of Covid-19.

The virus has had far reaching ramifications, affecting life as we have all known it. The world has been changed forever, while the economic, political, social and cultural systems have been shaken and tried. We have all faced the challenges presented by Covid-19 on a corporate, collective and personal level. However, a few good things have also come out.

The disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences have an opportunity to contribute in assisting the world in understanding and dealing with the complexities ushered by Covid-19. Elements such as empathy, care and resilience have come out as integral aspects of human existence - universally. The human resilience continues to triumph, and we have seen heart-warming pockets of human solidarity and empathy.

In the Higher Education sector, we have all been thrown into the deep end of e-learning and long distance pedagogies - a fact that has brought a lot of pressure, and challenges, but also very exciting opportunities for rethinking how Universities teach, research and do community engagement.

I would like to appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of all academics, staff and students in quickly embracing e-learning. At some moments, the preparations, and hard work has been overwhelming and we have all experienced moments of anxiety. However, as my great grandfather taught me - Ha ho na ntho e tsoarellang ruri - no challenges last forever. Thus, we look to the future with hope and enthusiasm, as we gear up to service our students and preserve the academic project.



Prof Jesmael Matanga, Head of the School of Humanities

In the next few months, the school will continue to closely monitor the participation of our students and to make sure that no students are left behind.



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2020

e-BRIEF



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Natural and Applied Sciences

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life and the way of living as we know it.

Worldwide people are learning new behavioral patterns and how to interact with each other in order to reduce the chances of becoming the next victim of this invisible enemy. The higher education sector has also not been spared from the turmoil caused by the virus, with SPU and by extension NAS, having to implement, prematurely so, the online teaching, and conducting all meetings virtually, including the School Board meetings.

The School has been thrown into the deep end as academics grapple with identifying methods of effective online teaching as well as online assessment, without compromising the quality of the programmes.

NAS is first of the four Schools to welcome back the first cohort of 36 final year BSc students who will start with their laboratory practicals from the week of 13 July 2020.

The two Departments, Biological and Agricultural Sciences, and Physical and Earth Sciences have both done a splendid job to prepare the laboratories in compliance to COVID-19 safety guidelines. The second and third cohorts of NAS students will arrive back on campus on 17 and 31 July respectively.



Prof Aifheli Gelebe, Head of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences

With the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting health systems internationally resulting in the loss of many lives, the School is also contributing by conducting research based on the virus.

Research projects under study here include (a) contact tracing tool, (b) efficacy of government measures, (c) fake news detection, (d) COVID-19 epidemiology tracking and (e) diagnosis prediction tool.

◀ GO BACK