



SOL PLAATJE
UNIVERSITY

SEP 2020

e-BRIEF



As the country moves to progressively lower alert levels related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University is also moving in the direction of returning to some sort of normality.

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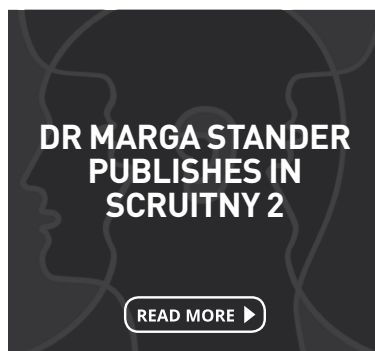
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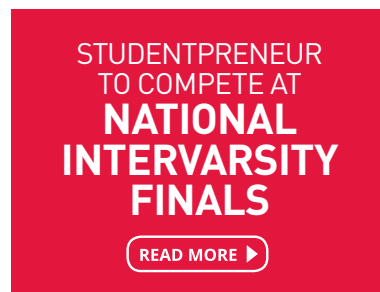
**— Women's Month —
HEALING
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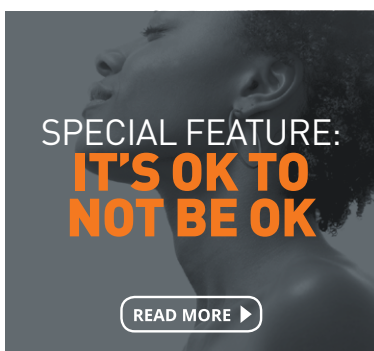
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Contributions, comments and suggestions are welcome and these can be sent to mosima.mehlape@spu.ac.za.
The next edition is due out in November 2020.

Editor: Mosima Mehlape

SOL PLAATJE
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WELCOMING A FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED SPU

As the country moves to progressively lower alert levels related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University is also moving in the direction of returning to some sort of normality.

But our perception of normal has been challenged in unique ways this year so what we return to could be a fundamentally changed institution and higher education sector.

During Alert Level 2 we planned to invite about 66% of our students back onto campus and continue with online teaching and learning for the remainder of this academic year. Following the President's announcement on 16 September 2020, that we are moving down to Alert Level 1, these plans are being amended.

More administrative staff are expected to return to full-time duties on campus.

Their return will necessitate a review of the protocols around meetings and general university activities in line with the Alert Level 1 regulations.

The coming months and the next year will bring with it grave financial and social challenges for the higher education sector. The emergency transition to online teaching and learning and preparing campuses for the return of students and staff have been capital intensive projects. These together with diminishing income streams and cuts in the overall subsidy funding from government mean that we will have to rethink the role of the University as a social institution.

At SPU our funding from government will remain stable for now and the government considers us low risk in terms of managing the spread of COVID-19 and because we are on course to complete the academic year in 2020.



We have been fortunate to have a limited number of COVID-19 infections amongst our staff and students. In each case the person has recovered fully and I want to wish them and each of you continued good health.

We have all adhered well to the health and safety measures implemented at the University and had a relatively smooth transition to online teaching and learning but we cannot rest on our laurels. As our numbers increase on campus we need to continue to be vigilant about our health and safety and safeguard the academic project.

I wish both staff and students well during the second semester and look forward to more engagements with you in the coming months.

Professor Andrew Crouch Vice-Chancellor and Principal



SOL PLAATJE
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SEP 2020

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HOUNOURING MR RAYMOND OLANDER

Mr Raymond Olander has retired after six years of serving as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at SPU.

Mr Olander joined SPU in August 2014, when the University was still in its infancy. Together with Professor Yunus Ballim and the Registrar at the time, he formed the first executive triumvirate at SPU. He brought with him a wealth of expertise in higher education operations management which he had acquired through executive positions at various universities in the country.

His initial responsibilities at SPU covered the full COO portfolio which included the finance operations. At the end of 2018 the finance function was placed under the new Chief Financial Officer.

Mr Olander says that on his bucket list was the desire to begin a new university and at SPU he was given that unique opportunity. He plans to relax and take on domestic projects in his retirement.



"It is never easy for an institution to lose a leader and for one as young as SPU the loss of the institutional knowledge is a difficult one" says Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Andrew Crouch.

We wish Mr Olander well on this next leg of his life's journey and thank him for his commitment and service to the SPU project.

VC'S REGIONAL VISIT TO UPINGTON

The Vice-Chancellor has identified expanded stakeholder engagement and improving the number of our enrolments as part his priorities for the next few years.

He will therefore undertake visits, over the next 12 months, to different regions in the Northern Cape Province to engage with various stakeholders for the purposes of developing or strengthening partnerships. He will also use the opportunity to meet with our alumni who are based in these regions so that we begin the process of creating a cohort of ambassadors for SPU. In addition, his visits will include a presentation on the SPU Talent Pipeline Project.

The SPU Pipeline Talent Project is a programme through which we will identify the top ten performing learners in grades 10, 11 and 12 from a broad range of schools in the Northern Cape Province. These learners will then be accommodated at SPU during their school holidays (one week in March, two weeks in June and one week in September) and participate in a programme which focuses on a psycho-social educational enrichment curriculum of deep immersion in areas such as Mathematics, Scientific Thinking, Science, Literacies (Computer, Language), Life Skills, Critical Diversity and broader subjects such as Forensics, Economics, Law and International Relations. This type of programme is extremely successful in creating a pipeline of excellent learners that will enter university, and in other universities has already produced a number of medical doctors, nurses, actuaries, accountants, economists and engineers who have impacted positively on their communities.

THE FIRST REGIONAL VISIT WAS UNDERTAKEN TO UPINGTON FROM 6 TO 8 SEPTEMBER.

The SPU delegation comprised: Professor Andrew Crouch (Vice-Chancellor and Principal), Professor Pierre Joubert (Head of School: Economic and Management Sciences), Ms Annalene Marais (Chief Financial Officer) and Ms Kashini Maistry (Senior

Manager: Communication and Marketing).

The delegation met with Mr Anthony Mac Minn, the Manager of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator (CFERI) to discuss the possible partnership between SPU and CFERI. CFERI has as its main focus, the entrepreneurial development of youth/ students in the Upington catchment area. A secondary focus is currently on black, rural, disabled and female development. Services are provided essentially within the Dawid Kruiper municipal area but are extended to the entire ZF Mgcawu district.

Following this meeting the delegation undertook an exploratory visit to the VUT Campus in Upington. The campus was established in 1995 in order to provide tertiary education to the rural communities of the Northern Cape Province. It was envisioned that the Upington Campus meet the higher educational needs of the communities of Upington and neighbouring towns such as Keimoes, Kakamas, Kenhardt, Olifantshoek, Groblershoop, Prieska as well as other regions such as Namakwaland, Pixley ka Seme (De Aar-Prieska area), JTG (Kuruman area) and even as far as Namibia.

The Vice-Chancellor then made a presentation, on the SPU Pipeline Talent Project, to the top learners in Grades 11 and 12 from Carlton van Heerden Secondary School, Saul Damon Secondary School, AJ Ferreira Secondary School.

The visit was concluded with a dinner hosted by the Vice-Chancellor for SPU alumni who reside in Upington.



SOL PLAATJE'S *MHUDI*: A CENTURY LATER

Creative Writing lecturer, Mr Sabata-mpho Mokae, was invited to guest edit BKO Literature Magazine's June 2020 special edition that celebrated a hundred years since Sol Plaatje finished writing his English novel, *Mhudi*.

Mr Mokae's tasks included sourcing content and sifting through it to present an edition that is respectable and befitting for the person of Sol Plaatje's stature. He also received contributions from seasoned academics and novelists such as Professor Bankole Omotoso, Professor Tshepo Madlingozi, former publishing editor of The Business Weekly & Review in Botswana Tshireletso Motlogelwa, novelist Mphuthumi Ntabeni and our very own Creative Writing lecturer Ms Sizakele Mokhele, amongst others.

Many of the contributions explored *Mhudi* as a historical and feminist novel, the reasons why Plaatje wrote it in English, the relationship between *Mhudi* and Plaatje's other book *Native Life* in South Africa, as well as its relevance a century later.

"It is an affirming gesture from the publishers of BKO Literature Magazine and I am privileged to have been the guest editor of this once-in-a-century edition", said Mr Mokae.

This special edition of BKO Literature Magazine is one of the ways Plaatje scholars and enthusiasts all over the world are celebrating the centenary of *Mhudi* this year.

"There is also a volume of academic essays edited by Professor Brian Willan and I with contributions from Professors Antjie Krog, Zakes Mda, Laurence Wright, Chris Thurman, Lesego Malepe and Shole J. Shole and others. This edited volume, titled *Sol Plaatje's Mhudi: history, criticism, celebration* is expected to come out in October this year", says Mr Mokae.



Geko Publishing, will also be re-releasing the centenary edition of *Mhudi*.

The centenary edition is based on the 1930 Lovedale edition and Mokae's contribution focuses on the author's biographical details and the context and relevance of the novel a century later. The publishers intend to launch the centenary edition of *Mhudi* on Sol Plaatje's birthday, Friday 9 October 2020. This will be a limited edition making the re-release a collector's item as each book will be numbered from 1 to 100.

ABOUT *MHUDI*

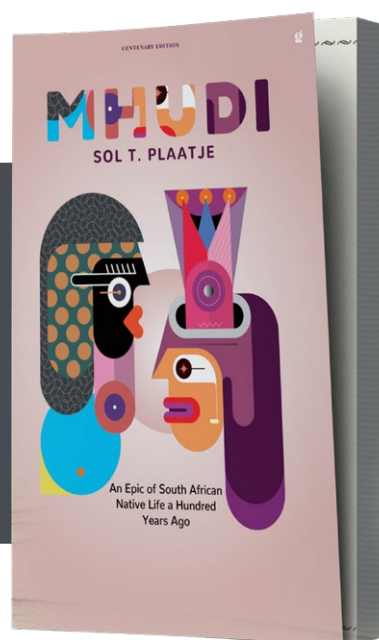
Sol Plaatje wrote *Mhudi*, which was the first English novel to be written by a black South African, in England in 1919 -1920. It is a love story between *Mhudi* and *Ra-Thaga* set against the backdrop of the war between the Barolong and Matebele under *Mzilikazi*, which took place in the 1830s in Kunena (present-day Setlagole in the North West Province).

In the novel Plaatje reconstructs the events leading to the war and the aftermath when the Barolong entered into an alliance with the

Afrikaners and managed to drive the Matebele up North.

Mhudi is also seen as a feminist novel; Plaatje made the character of *Mhudi* the central and life-giving figure in the novel. *Mhudi* was meant to undermine the heavily entrenched patriarchy of the time.

You can download your copy of *Mhudi: A century later* [here](#).



CTLPD HOSTS FIRST ACADEMIC INDUCTION PROGRAMME

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Programme Development (CTLPD) held a successful academic staff induction programme on 25 and 26 June 2020.

Facilitated and conceptualised by Dr Vanessa Agbedahin, Programme Manager: Career Path Development in CTLPD, the goal of the SPU Academic Induction Programme is to establish a conducive and supportive environment for new staff to transition into SPU, introduce new academics to academic and administrative structures and policies, interrogate discourses on and research into teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education and to develop an understanding of the interface between teaching, learning, and assessment and between pedagogy, content, context of learning, and assessment.

The programme further aims to understand and support student learning in higher education, develop transformative, engaged and responsive pedagogies and practices that support learning and support programme and curriculum design and development.

This first-ever SPU Induction Programme welcomed ten academics from the Schools of Humanities, Economic and Management Sciences and Natural and Applied Sciences who recently joined the institution. Amongst these were Dr Osayuwamen Omoruyi, Prof MD. Kabir, Prof Nhamo Chaukura, Dr Edmore Chitukutuku, Dr Karthigasen Gopalan and Prof Olugbenga Oluwagbemi.



DR MARGA STANDER PUBLISHES IN SCRUTINY 2

Dr Marga Stander, Senior Lecturer: Afrikaans in the School of Humanities published portions of her research in the UNISA Press (Routledge and Taylor & Francis publication) journal Scrutiny 2.

Her article, titled *The Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and Language Proficiency amongst Multilingual L2 Students*, looked at the inadequate English language proficiency of first-year students which proved to be an obstacle to successful academic literacy and performance.

As English is not a home language for many of these students, the research question that was investigated is whether weak performance in English can be directly related to the use of language learning strategies.

THE STUDY WAS DONE TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS A CORRELATION BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (INDEPENDENT VARIABLE) AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (DEPENDENT VARIABLE).

This correlation was tested by using a standardised test and questionnaire. Data were analysed using Spearman's rank-order correlation, by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results indicate a statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.26$) between compensation strategies and language proficiency.



Dr Stander's article reflects on the pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of an L2 and recommendations are made in this regard.

SPU HOSTS 1ST VIRTUAL OPEN DAY ON 7TH BIRTHDAY



22 August 2020 was a special day for SPU, not only was it our 7th birthday but we also hosted our very first Virtual Open Day.

This first of its kind Virtual Open Day saw over 2300 prospective students and their parents visit the SPU website to watch the virtual event.

The SPU Open Day is an annual event that takes place during the first semester and affords prospective students an opportunity to find out more about funding, the programmes on offer, admission requirements, the student life and residences.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, prospective students and their parents were still afforded an opportunity to explore SPU's programme offerings, admission requirements and the SPU student life from the safety of their own homes.

The Vice Chancellor and Principal, the Heads of Schools, the newly elected SRC President, the Acting Senior Manager: Student Affairs and the Manager: Financial Aid provided detailed information to encourage learners to consider studying at SPU.



Prospective students were also given step by step instructions on how to use the new online application system. Visitors got an opportunity to view the SPU campus and its award-winning buildings and hear from current SPU students about their personal experiences of studying at SPU.

Prospective students still have access to the Virtual Open Day video which can be viewed on the SPU website homepage.



WOMEN'S MONTH HEALING DIALOGUE

To celebrate Women's Month, the School of Humanities in partnership with the Department of Sport Arts and Culture (DSAC) successfully hosted an online Women's Month Healing Dialogue on 31 August 2020.

The purpose of the event was to deliberate on women's responses to daily living challenges and to focus on the possible stresses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and wellbeing of women. The panel of four distinguished speakers comprised of a Clinical Psychologist, Mrs Desire Mtanga who has extensive knowledge in psychotherapy; Reverend Phumzile Mabizela who is an activist and a specialist in spirituality and healing; Ms Vivienne Abrahams-Aliveriotis who engaged with the audience on the topic of peace building and healing; and Ms Phumzile Rakosa, a qualified art counsellor, who shared with the audience the process of journaling and its importance in the healing process.

All dialogue activities were aimed at helping women improve their physical and psychological wellbeing by gaining mental and emotional clarity and to get a deeper understanding of themselves.



THE PSYCHOLOGY
DEPARTMENT IN THE SCHOOL
OF HUMANITIES PRESENTS:

— Women's Month —
**HEALING
DIALOGUE**
31 AUG 2020

SPEAKERS:

 Vivienne Abrahams-Aliveriotis Peace Builder & Community Art Counsellor	 Desire Mtanga Clinical Psychologist	 Phumzile Rakosa Educator and Community Art Counsellor	 Rev. Phumzile Mabizela Executive Director: ARTS4U
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 **sport, arts & culture**
Department of
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA


SOL PLAATJE
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SANLAM DONATES PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

On 20 July 2020, the Sanlam Group donated 500 masks and hand sanitizers, including foot-operated hand sanitiser dispenser stands to SPU. The personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used by both our staff and students.

The standalone foot-operated sanitiser dispensers will be used by the School of Education and the School of Natural and Applied Sciences for students to sanitise their hands during laboratory work.

The donation comes after the Sanlam Group donated R1 billion, in partnership with the Motsepe Foundation, to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Further funds were made available to Sanlam sales channels directed to assist key accounts in sourcing PPE gear as a sponsorship.



“We are thankful for this donation from the Sanlam Group”, said Mr Themba Dingindlela, SPU’s Director: Facilities and Services. “The PPE donation came at the right time as students are back on campus and this goes a long way in assisting our efforts and preparedness to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic within our institution”.

Ms Hanlie Buys, Sanlam’s Business Manager in Kimberley, said “As very close working organisations, we would like to keep a healthy and progressive relationship with SPU as Sanlam currently provides life policy and investment services to SPU employees and provides financial education to SPU students. This donation is a symbol of valuing SPU as one of our key partners”.



SPU STUDENTPRENEUR TO COMPETE AT NATIONAL INTERVARSITY FINALS

The Annual National Intervarsity Student Entrepreneurship Competition is hosted by Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE), across all 26 public universities in South Africa.

This is an initiative established by the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

The purpose of this competition is to identify top student entrepreneurs at these universities in order to recognize and showcase their businesses and to encourage investment into such student businesses.

Five studentpreneurs were selected to represent SPU at the regional rounds that took place in July 2020. After competing against studentpreneurs from four other universities, Ms Pako Ramogogane of SPU won the EDHE Intervarsity Regional Rounds.



Her accomplishment is remarkable because she beat a total of 3500 entrants from all 26 universities when she won in the New Ideas Category for her campus driving school business idea. She has secured a spot as one of the top 27 studentpreneurs to compete at the national rounds in November 2020.

"The School of Economic and Management Sciences is proud of Ms Ramogogane's achievement and we wish her the best in the national rounds", said Head of School Professor Pierre Joubert.

Ms Gail Motlhaudi, the Student Entrepreneurship Coordinator, said "We are proud of this achievement as Ms Ramogogane who is not only representing the School of Economic and Management Sciences but SPU at a national level. It is great to see Ms Ramogogane wave the female entrepreneurship flag high".



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SPECIAL FEATURE: IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK

It's okay to whisper, it's okay to scream
It's okay to stare ahead towards a blurry hill
It's okay to crawl, it's okay to fly
To trudge a path of finest thread along meandering stream

It's okay to cry, it's okay to laugh
It's okay to be yourself amidst a judging web
It's okay to filter, it's okay to soak
To state your case with no remorse for life is naught but tough

It's okay to ponder, it's okay to pause
It's okay to take your time and be in nether sphere
It's okay to flutter, it's okay to fret
To show the softness of your soul in view of other cause

It's okay to stutter, it's okay to flail
It's okay to fail for words that show your inner state
It's okay to blunder, it's okay to bluff
To go about as though you knew that you would never fail

It's okay to prosper, it's okay to thrive
It's okay to give the best in all your waking dreams
It's okay to cherish, it's okay to float
To beam with smile, assured you are a mortal quite alive!

'Kunle Adebowale *School of Natural and Applied Sciences*

◀ GO BACK

THE CO-CREATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Dr Adesuwa Vanessa Agbedahin

*Centre for Teaching, Learning and
Programme Development*

Co-creative teaching and learning and the normalizing of the abnormal entail the maximizing of the entry-level of students' knowledge.

These encapsulate the need to link learning and teaching to real-life issues, contexts and the student world and realities. The need to let students know that they are being valued and respected for who they are and aspire to be, are central and teachers must make this clear.

The exploration of the knowledge base of students is important for the introduction of new knowledge and the building up of in-depth disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. We cannot keep handling students like banks where we deposit money (knowledge content). Perhaps we should begin to handle students like banks where we can withdraw money from (knowledge base) but this time, we withdraw contextual knowledge even without making any knowledge content deposits yet.

**THE BRAINS OF STUDENTS
ARE ACTIVE, FULL
AND RICH. IF WE CAN
STRATEGICALLY DIVE INTO
THEIR THOUGHT PROCESS,
AND HARNESS THEIR
AGENCY, WE CAN REACH
THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS.**



The contextual profiling of our students is therefore important. Let's know them well. Who are they? What are they thinking about? What do they prefer? What do they value in life and in the teaching and learning space? What do they aspire to do and become? Consequently, what is needed to reach the hearts and minds of students for more sustainable results and productivity?

What teaching, learning and assessment approaches would work best and provide long and short term benefits to students, families, communities, nations and our world that is full of crises and uncertainties?

Can this be the
co-creation of
teaching and
learning, the
normalizing of
the abnormal?

FOCUS: WHY I CHOSE TO STUDY DATA SCIENCE

As the only University on the African continent to offer an undergraduate degree in Data Science, Ms Taryn Michael, a third-year BSc Data Science student who was featured in the SPU Virtual Open Day video, shares with us her SPU BSc Data Science experience.

"I have always been interested in creating systems and particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Applying to the School of Natural and Applied Sciences was therefore an obvious choice for me. Combined with my flair for the arts, I believe I can bring a unique, creative skillset to the world of Data Science.

Data Science is an exciting and quite diverse, interdisciplinary field. You are exposed to Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics all at the same time. Through this approach you are taught to tackle multiple problems in these various domains.

Studying this degree has exposed me to various companies through the data science competitions and code clinics that I took part in. I have been offered internships and resources that will enable me to continue to work on projects that I want to pursue. Companies are regularly looking for Data Scientists because of their varied areas of expertise and the need to process Big Data. There are numerous graduate programmes offered by major companies for Data Scientists since they will eventually add value to their corporate teams.



I believe that the support provided by our lecturers and student tutors, together with opportunities to attend competitions and code camps, ensure we are well-prepared to enter the world of work after completion of this degree."

SPORTS HOSTS WEBINARS

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented disruptions at all levels of society. The Sports sector has been heavily impacted by the inability to continue with face-to-face sporting activities.

Against this backdrop and in efforts to keep the sporting industry active until university sports tournaments can resume, SPU Sports hosted two webinars on 23 July and 3 September 2020 entitled *Alcohol, hubbly & recreational drugs use by athletes and impact on performance*, and *Return to sport post-COVID*, respectively.

Dr Crosby Mulungwa, a seasoned sports physician and current team doctor for the South African national U/23 football team, was the guest speaker on the topic of *Alcohol, hubbly & recreational drugs use by athletes and impact on performance*. He presented a body of work that outlined various substances and the dangers and risks involved in consuming these as an athlete. Dr Mulungwa also deliberated on the possible reasons why athletes ingest drugs as a means to cope with anxiety or provide mental relief from the pressure to perform on the sports field.

Dr Dhavina Naidoo, another SAFA accredited health profession, was the guest speaker on the issue of the *Return to sport post-COVID*. Dr Naidoo highlighted what the return to sport post-COVID 19 will look like and discussed the current health protocols set-out by the World Health Organisation (WHO). She also outlined the South African COVID-19 protocol and procedures that must be adhered to.

The two webinars were also opportunities for SPU Sport to form a relationship with Sports Medicine Africa.

A proposed programme of high-performance sport in universities is underway and will include measures to ensure that sport integrity procedures are followed in preparation for the resumption of university sports tournaments. The programme is subject to Senior Management approval.



Dr Dhavina Naidoo



Dr Crosby Mulungwa



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MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL School of Economic and Management Sciences

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown regulations resulted in the acceleration of the move to digitalise SPU and we had to seriously reconsider the way that we teach, assess, engage, support and prepare our students.

Valuable lessons were learnt during semester one which will be applied going forward, including years to come.

The online modality has its challenges such as losing the personal and social contact between academics and students and it is envisaged that the gradual return of students to campus will lessen this distance whilst continuing with online teaching.

A combination of online teaching and individual consultations with academics will be the modus operandi next semester which represents the best of both modalities.

The School is excitedly preparing to offer the Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship from next year and numerous enquiries from prospective students were received. This programme will add to the growing Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) and enrolment of the School in anticipation of the transition to a Faculty in 2021.



I wish to convey my appreciation to all staff and students who walked the extra mile during these challenging and uncertain times. Preliminary indications are that the semester was successfully completed. Well done!

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



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MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL School of Education

The year 2020 opened with much excitement in the School of Education as we ran our first national conference which was a resounding success. Little did we know that the rest of the year would turn out very differently.

None of us imagined the challenges awaiting just three months later when the President announced the national lockdown.

The University's announcement of the plan to recover the academic project via remote teaching and learning brought both excitement and anxiety about engaging in this unfamiliar form. However, the School of Education staff and students rose to the challenge. As the Second semester approaches we as a School are confident that our students will be able to complete their studies in 2020.

We appreciate the CLTPD for the training and support to staff and students as we navigated the unfamiliar terrain of online teaching and learning. In particular, I want to appreciate all the academics for the sterling work they did to ensure the completion of the academic project in the School in Semester 1. I hope you have had a well-deserved rest during the recess.

I wish all Education staff and students an equally successful second semester. We are now gearing for the new academic year and getting ready to receive the School of Education class of 2021.

The school is pleased to announce that we are looking to offer several new programmes in the new year. These will soon be advertised on various media platforms.



We invite those who are looking to make a difference in society as teachers to come and join the School of Education and be part of the wonderful experience of becoming an SPU graduate and a professional educator.

*Prof Audrey Msimanga,
Head of the School of Education*



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Humanities

In many ways COVID-19 is changing how we teach and engage with students - ushering what is popularly being characterised as the “new norm”.

While the disease has affected society, and the academy in negative ways, it presents opportunities for different ways of working, teaching, and researching for academics and students. It is clear that blended learning is the future of teaching and learning.

As we embrace technologies, the Arts, Humanities and Social Science disciplines are integral to helping institutions and society in adopting the virtual without minimising humanity, social skills, communication and interacting with people - all of which are core aspects of being human and humane.

As Universities we must embrace technologies, without reproducing societal inequalities or marginalising the less privileged among society. In this quarter we have all relatively settled and adjusted to the ways of working in the context of COVID-19. As we operationalise Level 2 Lockdown rules, we continue to hold our frayed steadily, offering inclusive support for our staff and students.

In terms of academic planning, the School is finalising assessments for Semester 1 amid all odds and after a much-desired two-week rest, we look forward to Semester 2, using the experiences and lessons learnt from Semester 1.

Our revised BA has been approved by Senate and we are excited to be able to start 2021 with a fresh, innovative BA that equips our students for the ever fluid world of work in the 21st century. More exciting however, is the growth of our postgraduate offering in the School. We are anticipating expanding the subject offerings at Honours level, adding the disciplines of Archaeology, Anthropology, and Afrikaans to our current offerings. We expect to launch SPU's first masters programme in early 2021.

Despite the challenges of COVID 19, we have slowly resumed the intellectual and we have continued with our ground breaking public engagement programmes. The School seminar series has resumed. In this quarter the school hosted a colloquium on the late Credo Mutwa who passed away in March 2020. Mkhulu Mutwa was a rich fountain of indigenous knowledge, known as an author of books, that draw upon African mythology, traditional Zulu folklore and his own personal encounters. The colloquium was hosted by the School in partnership with the National and Provincial Departments



of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) together with his family, the Credo Mutwa Foundation (CMF), the Credo Mutwa Reference Group (CMRG), students, the youth of South Africa, as well as communities of healers and leaders.

To commemorate Women's Month, the School again partnered with DSAC and mental health practitioners to offer a workshop on a multi modal healing approach to women. The dialogue incorporated the knowledge and experiences of psychologists, community arts counsellors, peace builders and faith-based practitioners who engaged with women to find healing strategies for the daily stresses experienced by women.

To the Humanities teams, our partners, the communities, and other offices at SPU (Marketing and Communications), we say Re a leboga. We value such activities as they encapsulate our social justice agenda and strategic thrusts of being a decolonised space.

As we move into summer and towards 2021, we collectively chant Pula! Nala!

Prof Jesmael Matanga, Head of the School of Humanities



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

School of Natural and Applied Sciences

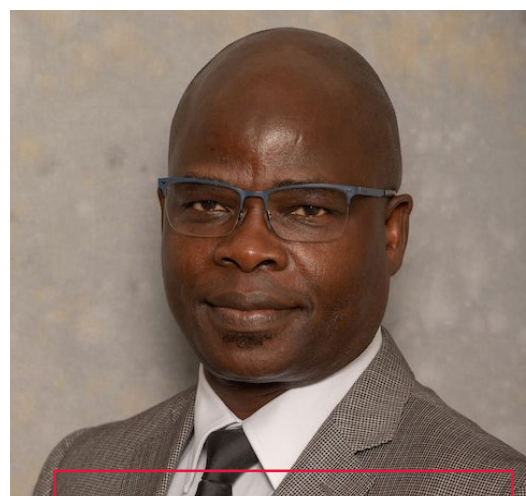
During the last four months of the first semester (lockdown levels four and three), approximately 15% of students were given the opportunity to return to campus to enable them to attend modules that have a practical component.

With the lockdown reduced to level two, the School will welcome back on campus the remaining 85% of students.

Although the majority of students will be back on campus, teaching and learning will continue to take place remotely for the remaining academic year with the exception of practical sessions for students with modules that integrate a practical component.

As a 'new normal', our academics and students have embraced remote learning and believe that we will continue to improve and to explore in this new area.

Research shows that in order to be successful in online classes, students need to be versatile in their approach to learning – they must be able to manage their time, motivate themselves to work on schedule and seek help when needed.



*We look forward to an
even more successful
2021 academic year.*

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

Therefore there is a need to help our students to take responsibility for their learning. However, the School is confident that despite the challenges bought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 academic year will still be a success.

On another note, as we approach 2021 the School is further excited about introducing two new Honours programmes next year. In addition to the four undergraduate and three Honours programmes offered currently, the Bachelor of Science Honours in Biological Sciences and the Bachelor of Science Honours in Mathematical Sciences (both Applied Mathematics and Statistics specialisations) will be offered in 2021.