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Highlights



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As we approach the holiday season and wrap off another incredible year, we want to sincerely thank you for your contributions and constant support in sharing your success stories and experiences with us. Your accomplishments inspire many people and serve as a testament to the calibre of our university. We can confidently state that 2024 was a year of growth and cooperation in all facets of our academic and university life as we finish off the chapter of our 20-year journey and consider the achievements of this semester.

In this final issue, we reflect on the incredible accomplishments of 2024, and some of our highlights for this semester include:

- The launch of Research Centre on Human-Technology Interaction envisioned to explore the transformative relationship between humans and technology. The centre was officially opened by Dr Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, Founder and Chairperson of Kalagadi Manganese who also contributed R10.9 million to further establish and develop the centre.
- The welcoming of our new Chairperson of Council, Cllr Rajesh Mahabeer, an accomplished leader with extensive background in the finance sector. Cllr Mahabeer brings with him a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to higher education and governance.
- The celebration of our academics and researchers who received accolades in their respective fields. Amongst them are Prof. Jaco Gericke who was elected as a Fellow of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE), Prof. Kanzumba Kusakana, who is amongst the top-cited scientists globally, Prof. Tshepiso Makhafola who was awarded the Iso Lomso Fellowship for his extensive research in genotoxicity and the use of natural products to prevent mycotoxin-induced genotoxicity and carcinogenicity and Prof. Lize Theron, who received the 2024 SANRAL SAICE National award under the Community Based Project category, an innovative initiative and a potential gamechanger project that has transformed the road maintenance approach in all provinces.

- The inauguration of our three academics, Professor Yali Woyessa, Gregory Alexandra and Alfred Makura into full professorship.
- Our successful partnership with Samsung, where we graduated 46 students in essential 4IR skills from two cohorts in the Samsung Innovation Campus (SIC) programme. Furthermore, our partnership with National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA) where we transferred the much-needed digital literacy skills to about 140 community members to enhance their ability to navigate digital spaces and increase their employability.
- The recognition of our university as the first African university to earn the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged University award. The award solidified the university efforts to become a leader in innovation, entrepreneurship and engagement in higher education across Africa.
- Lastly, the extensive progress on some of our mega projects that have been completed.

We are looking forward to a bigger and better CUT, ready to welcome new students and graduate our first cohort in the new Welkom Campus Hall.

We wish you a joyful and restful time with your loved ones. May this holiday season bring you joy, tranquillity, and the opportunity to rejuvenate for the upcoming year.

Season's Greetings, Editorial Team

CUT's Vice-Chancellor donates R182K to the SRC to establish a much-needed food bank



From left, Dr Bernard Sebake, Dean of Students, Dr Charity Mbileni-Morema, CUT former Chairperson of Council, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Bloemfontein SRC President, Mr Metsing Matlhaku, and Welkom SRC President, Mr Tokelo Makintane.

In a progressive initiative to tackle student food insecurity, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, donated R182,725.57 to the Student Representative Council (SRC) to launch a food bank. This initiative aims to assist disadvantaged students with food and other essential needs, ensuring that no student is left behind due to financial hardships.

The generous donation was made possible through the \$10,000 speaker fee Prof. Dube received from Virginia Tech via the Henry Luce Fund, as part of her participation in the Tech for Humanity summit in June 2024.

The fund, which is a joint effort between the Vice-Chancellor and the SRC, is specifically designed to provide students with food and assist those struggling with registration fees. Prof. Dube emphasised the importance of continuity, encouraging future SRCs to build on this collaborative initiative.

"This donation is the start of a fund that builds on the work that the 2023/24 SRC has started. We aim to create a sustainable fund where students can receive assistance, at least meeting them halfway, whether it's for registration fees or basic food needs. This mission will be handed down to every following SRC to grow the fund through campaigns and gain more support for our student leadership and community."

Dr Bernard Sebake, Dean of Students, expressed his gratitude for the Vice-Chancellor's donation, noting how crucial it is in addressing the wider socio-economic challenges students face. "It is important to recognise that student indigency in higher education is part of what has evolved within the context of higher education. Building a university fit for purpose requires all of us to come together and support our students. We must address the challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequalities that continue to persist in our economy. Thank you, VC, for helping to create a truly student-centric university."

To donate to the food bank visit https://www.cut.ac.za/Donate/food-bank

CUT welcomes German delegation from Mittweida University of Applied Science to Strengthen Strategic Partnerships



Prof. Dr Volker Tolkmitt, Rector: Mittweida University of Applied Science and Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

The Central University of Technology is dedicated to nurturing and maintaining transformative partnerships through strategic engagements and collaborative initiatives. On 09 September 2024, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, hosted distinguished delegation from Mittweida University of Applied Science, Germany. The delegation, led by Prof. Dr Volker Tolkmitt, the Rector, and Dr Cornelius Hagenmeier, advisor to the Rector on internationalisation, visited CUT to explore possible areas of collaboration and enhance the existing partnership.

CUT and Hochschule Mittweida have a longstanding relationship that dates back to 1998 when they initially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with no expiry date. Hochschule Mittweida was the first institution to respond to research conducted by Dr Henri Jacobs on Work Integrated Learning (WIL), previously known as Cooperative Education. In the early 2000s, the university hosted students from Mittweida in Bloemfontein for WIL placements, primarily in the media studies program.

During the discussions with the delegates, Prof. Pamela Dube expressed her eagerness to revisit and update the agreement originally signed when CUT was still a Technikon. She emphasised the importance of aligning the agreement with the university's current status as it celebrates its 20th anniversary as a University of Technology. "Significant changes have occurred since the agreement was first signed, and I believe there are now more opportunities to explore and leverage."

Prof. Dr Volker Tolkmitt, expressed his strong commitment to restructuring some of the partnerships with the university, and explore new areas of collaboration. "We must refine existing partnerships and explore new avenues of cooperation." He described his experience as enriching, noting the valuable insights gathered from the visited faculties and different departments, Centers of Excellence as well as the exposure to diverse fields of study and research endeavours.

Central University of Technology officially launches the Research Centre on Human-Technology Interaction



From left: Mr Loyiso Manjezi CFO of Southern Jade Resources, Dr Charity Mbileni-Morema, former Chairperson of Council, Dr Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, Founder and Chairperson of Kalagadi Manganese, Her Majesty Kgosi Gaboilelwe Moroka Seleka, of the Barolong Boo Seleka Traditional Community of Thaba 'Nchu, and Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

CUT has officially launched the Research Centre on Human-Technology Interaction to explore the transformative relationship between humans and technology. This initiative is designed to address both the opportunities and challenges that arise from rapid technological advancements, emphasising the need for ethical solutions.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof. Pamela Dube articulated a powerful vision for the centre, stating, that technology should serve humanity, not the other way around. She highlighted the societal, ethical, and environmental implications of rapid technological progress. "The launch of this centre marks the beginning of a transformative journey for the university and society. In an age where technology permeates every aspect of our lives, it is easy to focus on the wonders of innovation, automation, artificial intelligence, and the conveniences that emerge with each technological breakthrough. However, as much as technology empowers us, it also presents profound challenges that demand a careful and human-centred approach. This is where the Research Centre on Human-Technology Interaction plays a critical role."

She also mentioned that the cornerstone of the centre is its commitment to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and working hand-in-hand with industry partners, government agencies, local communities, and international collaborators. "By fostering these relationships, we will ensure that our research remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with the real-world needs of society. This centre is not just for researchers and academics; it is a space for dialogue and collaboration where we will invite communities to voice their concerns and aspirations for a future shaped by technology. Together, we will co-create solutions that benefit everyone from the individual to the global level," she added.

The centre launch reflects CUT's commitment to shaping the future through innovation. "Our commitment is to address societal challenges head-on and contribute towards shaping a future where technology and innovation serve the greater good," Prof. Dube concluded.



Digital launch of the centre.

The launch was supported by Dr Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, Founder and Chairperson of Kalagadi Manganese, who generously contributed R10.9 million to establish and develop the centre further. She remarked on the significance of this initiative as a beacon of knowledge that fosters collaboration and drives impactful discoveries.

"This research centre represents a beacon of knowledge and a hub for pioneering research, fostering collaboration, inspiring creativity, and driving impactful discoveries that benefit society as a whole. Today, we stand at the threshold of a new era, one characterised by the relentless pursuit of knowledge, as we unveil this centre," she said.

The launch was graced by the presence of several distinguished guests who delivered keynote addresses and played a pivotal role in the launch's success. Among them were Prof. Sylvester Johnson: Co-founder and CEO of the Corporation for Public Interest Technology(virtually), Prof. Ahmed Bawa: Professor at the Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg, Prof. Yali Woyessa: Fulbright scholar and professor specialising in Water Resources Management, Prof. Premesh Lalu: Professor and founding director of the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape, Prof. Muthoni Masinde: Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, Dr Sweta Baniya: Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Professional and Technical Writing, Dr Charity Mbileni-Morema: former Chairperson of Council, Kgosi Gaboilelwe Moroka: Current ruler of Barolong Boo Seleka from Thaba Nchu, Dr Fallon Wilson: Founder of #BlackTechFutures Research Institute, Prof. Alfred Ngowi: Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research Innovation and Engagement and Dr Isaac McCoy: Dean of the School of Business at Stillman College.

CUT researchers invent Smart Electronic Wheelchair for the cognitively impaired community, the first of its kind in the country



A demonstration of the Smart electric wheelchair envisioned to navigate, recognise obstacles, and simultaneously construct a mapping and continuous localisation of its environment.

Background

Smart electric wheelchairs belong to a class of mobile robotics. The project sought to develop control and cooperation strategies for these classes of robots. The project focuses on healthcare applications (medical informatics) with emphasis on diagnostics, adaptability and communications.

Smart electric wheelchairs apply Internet of Medical Things for people living with cognitive, mental, and physical impairments, who also need to rely on some form of assistive mobility device for their flexibility. Traditional wheelchairs are effective for physical impairments but poorly suited for individuals with a combination of physical and cognitive or perceptual impairments. To accommodate users with cognitive impairment, several researchers have used technologies originally developed for mobile robots to create smart mobility devices.



"In the advanced world that we now live in, technology still lacks as there are still members in our society who are not benefitting as they should, namely the disabled community. There are no existing devices/aids that accommodates persons with other disabilities besides physical impairments in South Africa."

The lack of such inclusive technological aids led to the birth of Smart Electronic Wheelchair, an innovation pioneered by Prof. Elisha Markus and his team of local and international researchers in 2019. According to Prof. Markus, the "Smart Electronic Wheelchair" project focuses on holistic healthcare applications such as diagnostics, adaptability and communications to improve the quality of life of people living with cognitive, mental and physical impairments that rely on some form of assistive mobility device. The project also aims to develop assistive mobility devices, increase access to mobility, improve interaction with community, reduce reliance on people and reduce mental illness.

When elaborating on the idea behind the smart wheelchair invention, Prof. Markus said "If it does not have social impact, it is not science! The "Smart Wheelchair" is controlled by IoT devices fitted on it, and, it has a remote-control feature. Additionally, the wheelchair is equipped with navigation capabilities that enable it to detect obstacles and simultaneously find alternative routes while constructing a mapping and continuous localisation of its current environment.

The birth of the project

He said that the project started as a proposal for National Research Foundation (NRF) Thuthuka project in 2018 and was approved and funded for R1 million over three years. "The project was not a smooth start but our vast consultation with industry experts, changed tune into designing cooperative control for assistive mobilities. The funding enabled us to purchase five wheelchairs, cameras and sensors during the first year of the project in 2019, to begin working on prototypes. We received further funding for another 3 years after a successful first cycle (2019-2021). The project is now in the final year of the 2nd cycle."

He added that the assistive mobility device is the first of its kind in South Africa and the target market for the project is the Automobile Industry and the wheelchair community. "This is an enormous market given that about 1 billion of people are living with disability globally and about 200 million of them live with these sensory disabilities. Our next crucial step for this great innovation is putting it on the commercial market so that members from our disabled community can start enjoying better quality of life," he concluded.

Project team members: **CUT**: Prof ED Markus, Mr Teboho Ntsinyi, Mr Daniel Oladele, Ms Mabuzweni, **International**: Prof Eric Monacceli, Chair Interactive Robotic Team, LISV lab UVSQ France, **others**: Prof. Abu-Mahfouz (CSIR), Prof Anish and Prof Steyn (TUT)

An overview of smart wheelchairs connectivity in a smart city. The project is envisioned to reduce the dependency and enhance participation of disabled persons in society by developing assistive mobility and navigation, use of Al for diagnostics, leverage sensor fusion for adaptability and Integrate IoTs for communication.

CUT's Professor Kusakana is among the top-cited scientists globally



Congratulations to Prof. Kanzumba Kusakana!

Prof. Kanzumba Kusakana has done it again- securing his place among the top-cited scientists globally in the prestigious "Updated science-wide author databases of standardised citation indicators."

This recognition reaffirms his status as one of CUT's leading researchers and highlights the exceptional influence of his work on both national and global spheres. Prof Kusakana's ground-breaking contributions to Energy; Artificial Intelligence; Image Processing and Enabling as well as Strategic Technologies, continue to push the boundaries of research, placing CUT at the forefront.

Ranked among the top 300 researchers in South Africa, his latest achievement underscores his standing as a researcher of international acclaim. Starting his publishing journey in 2008, Prof. Kusakana's meteoric rise is a clear sign of his research quality and impact, outperforming peers who have been in the field for decades. With an impressive H-index of 22 and 2,159 citations, his influence in the academic world is undeniable.

Prof. Kusakana is a C2 NRF researcher with focus on Electrical Engineering, Renewable energy, Energy Storage, Energy Management and Optimisation. He was inaugurated as a full professor in the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering in March 2022, and has over 300 publications in journals, conferences proceedings and book chapters. His current research focuses on small scale renewable power generation as well as optimal energy management, which supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He is an associate editor for the IET Renewable Power Generation Journal (Impact factor 3.93), as well as for the Journal of Energy Storage (Impact factor: 6.583), and has a H-index of 3.1. He is a senior member of SAIEE, a professional Engineer registered with ECSA, a member of AEE and SAEEC. He obtained his BSc Engineering Degree in Electromechanical Engineering from the University of Lubumbashi, an MTech degree in Electrical Power Engineering from Tshwane University of Technology, an MBA in Energy Management from Cyprus Institute of Marketing, and a DTech in Electrical Engineering.

CUT Library and Information Services encourages research through Open Access



On 23 October 2024, the Central University of Technology (CUT) Library and Information Services celebrated International Open Access Week under the theme "Community over Commercialization: Reclaiming Academic Autonomy." The event aimed to highlight the need to prioritise open scholarship approaches that benefit both the public and academic communities. This served as a platform for discussion on how Open Access (OA) empowers researchers globally by providing access to essential information needed to tackle pressing issues.

Open Access Week is an invaluable chance to connect the global momentum toward the open sharing of knowledge with the advancement of policy changes and the importance of social issues affecting people around the world.

Prof. Muthoni Masinde, Dean of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (FEBIT) who was honoured for surpassing 1000 citations, highlighted the importance of Open Access (OA) in enhancing research visibility and impact. She reflected on her personal journey, noting how OA platforms have contributed to the success of her ITIKI project. "For my journey, Open Access has been indispensable. My research, particularly through the ITIKI project, has benefited immensely from Open Access's reach. My work garnered attention worldwide largely due to its availability on open platforms," she said.

Prof. Masinde encouraged researchers and institutions to consider the broader impact of OA on the academic world and beyond. She explained, "By adopting OA, we can reclaim autonomy over our scholarly output and foster a more inclusive scientific dialogue." She also highlighted the financial benefits, adding that OA eliminates costly journal subscriptions, making it more affordable for researchers and institutions.

Furthermore, she urged the academic community to embrace Open Access for the long-term benefits it offers. "Open Access is more than just an alternative publishing model. It is a commitment to the global dissemination of knowledge. OA empowers researchers across the globe by providing access to crucial information necessary to address pressing global issues such as climate change and sustainability," she concluded.

CUT Prof. Makhafola awarded the Iso Lomso Fellowship for his extensive research in genotoxicity and the use of natural products to prevent mycotoxin-induced genotoxicity and carcinogenicity



Prof. Tshepiso Makhafola bags the Iso Lomso Fellowship for his extensive research in genotoxicity and the use of natural products to prevent mycotoxin-induced genotoxicity and carcinogenicity.

Prof. Tshepiso Makhafola, Director: Centre for Quality of Health and Living in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences was recently awarded the Iso Lomso Fellowship, making him one of the eight successful candidates out of over 120 applicants.

Prof. Makhafola is an accomplished biochemist who is leading a pioneering research project focusing on harnessing the potential of South African medicinal plants and phytochemicals to manipulate alternative splicing for cancer therapy. This research has the significant potential to make a substantial impact on the academic and research communities.

His research has earned him a Y rating from the NRF, as well as the NRF-BELSPO and NRF-FRF awards, making a significant contribution to the field. He is a member of the Toxicology Association of South Africa (TOXSA) and the South African Association of Botanists (SAAB). Additionally, he is an extraordinary lecturer at the University of Pretoria's Pan African Cancer Research Institute (PACRI).

"My research focuses on genotoxicity and the use of natural products to prevent mycotoxin-induced genotoxicity and carcinogenicity, two under-reported health issues in developing countries"

According to Makhafola, Cancer is one of the leading causes of

death worldwide, including in South Africa. Chemotherapy remains the main method of cancer treatment. Despite advances in chemotherapy for the treatment of cancer, costs, side effects, and development of resistance to chemotherapy are major obstacles, particularly in the global south. Colorectal cancer (CRC), cervical cancer (CVC) and oesophageal cancer (EC) are ranked the third, fourth and eighth most common cancers worldwide, respectively. Colorectal cancer and EC have a global mortality rate of 5.8 and 5.3%, respectively. In South Africa, CRC is the fourth most common cancer, with a low survival rate of 8.1.

He added that the highest rates of cervical cancer incidence and mortality are in low-and-middle-income countries. "Oesophageal cancer is responsible for the second-highest number of cancer-related mortalities and has a 5-year relative survival rate of 4% in metastatic disease. Motivated by this evidence and challenges, we intend to investigate how South African medicinal plant extracts and phytocompounds that regulate alternative splicing can affect cancer growth and progression in these cancers. The urgency of this research is underscored by the high mortality rates of these cancers, making our work not only important but also highly relevant. It is estimated that more than 60% of anticancer drugs in clinical use originate from natural products, thereby pointing to their importance as promising sources for cancer drug development," said Prof. Makhafola.

"Alternative splicing can contribute to all cancer hallmarks; alternatively, spliced isoforms expressed in cancer are fundamental for developing tumour-specific molecular targets for prognosis and therapy. Several alternative splicing factors are overexpressed and highly mutated in different cancer tissues. Additionally, changes in the splicing patterns of various alternative splicing events were identified in tumours, demonstrating a prominent role in carcinogenesis and a potential prognostic indication. Developing new pharmaceuticals targeting alternative splicing may create new therapeutic avenues for cancer treatment," he concluded.

In his comments, Prof. Samson Mashele, acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement said "Prof. Makhafola's research work offers hope for improving global societal conditions. Together with the team, we seek collaborations with like-minded institutions to further this cause. We are also proactively pursuing funding opportunities to develop innovative solutions, enabling our university to lead this research undertaking under his leadership and offer solutions to the research community."

The Iso Lomso Fellowship award is not the first recognition for Prof. Makhafola. In 2020, he was amongst the 29 selected candidates of 130 nominations from all 26 universities for the pilot programme, Future Professors Programme (FPP) initiated by the Department of Higher Education and Training. In 2022, he established one of the CUT's state-of-the-art Biochemistry and Tissue Culture facility - The Centre for Quality of Health and Living (CQHL), envisioned to drive improvement in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness that maximises healthy outcomes for the people.

Researchers from CUT, UNISA and Sao Paulo University Collaborate on Successful NRF-BRICS Initiative



Ms Refilwe Moleyane, Deputy Director - International Academic Partnerships: CUT CGE, Dr Zolile Wiseman Dlamini, nGAP Lecturer-Physical Science and Methodology: CUT, Dr Tebogo Sfiso Mahule: UNISA, Ms Vanessa Pellegrini: Brazil, University Sao Paulo, Prof. Vijaya Srinivasu Vallabhapurapura: UNISA, Prof. Igor Polokarpov, University Sao Paulo: Brazil, Prof. Wendy Setlalentoa, Dean-Faculty of Humanities: CUT, Dr Patrick Moremoholo: Lecture: CUT, Dr Sachin V. Desarada: UNISA, Prof. Bekithemba Dube, Director - Center for Diversity in Higher Education: CUT, Mr Gerhard Beukes, Head of Department: MSTE and Mr Metsing Hlomelang: Coordinator: International Partnerships and Data Management - CGE: CUT.

Researchers from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil visited CUT to discuss ongoing collaborations and explore new opportunities for research partnerships.

The visiting team from Sao Paulo University included Dr Peligrini and Prof. Polikarpov, who were joined by five researchers from UNISA-Dr Sashin from the School of Computing, Dr Mahule, a Senior Technologist in the Physics Department, and Prof. Vallabhapurapu from the Physics Department. The researchers, along with Dr Zolile Dlamini from CUT, are currently engaged in a successful NRF-BRICS initiative that has been ongoing for more than a year.

During the visit, the researchers engaged with the Dean of Humanities, Head of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (MSTE), and representatives from various CUT entities, including the Center for Global Engagement (CGE). The entourage further explored the faculty programmes and other activities including the Research Clinic dedicated to support new academics in writing and publishing their first papers.

The collaboration between the trio demonstrates the power of international partnerships in advancing research and fostering academic excellence.

The visit concluded with a campus tour showcasing the various centers of excellence. The engagement resulted in several outcomes, including plans for another research visit in the near future, joint supervision of students, sponsorship and a student exchange programme.

Prof. Vallabhapurapu and Prof. Polikarpov offered to serve as editors on some of CUT's journals and organise more international scholars to increase the journals' international visibility.

CUT Conference commemorates a decade of embracing theory and practice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning



Attendees at the 10th annual International Conference on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

The 10th Annual International Conference on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning was held from 3-5 October 2024, under the theme: "A Decade of Embracing Theory and Practice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning" by the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT).

SoTL is a research-led form of professional learning launched in 2014 through the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG). It aims to unearth and contribute to the knowledge base of teaching and learning.

In her remarks, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube, emphasised the profound significance of the 10th anniversary of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She expressed the university's pride in SoTL's achievements and the elation in hosting this 10th international conference. "The year is equally important for the university, marking significant growth and achievements over the past 20 years as a university of technology. The institution is endowed with critical human capital, good infrastructure, and a large student intake to accelerate its growth and multiply its graduate and research outputs."

She added that the foundation that the institution has built over the last twenty years has been instrumental in its development, enabling it to achieve sevenfold what was accomplished in the previous twenty years. "The theme covers a wide range of exciting topics related to all theoretical and practical aspects. These topics include integrating cross-multidisciplinary perspectives in education and reviewing the current challenges in curriculum transformation, learner-centred teaching, artificial intelligence, and the future of innovative assessment. They provide the foundation for understanding educational phenomena and guiding the development of innovative and evidence-based teaching strategies and instructional designs. This comprehensive coverage ensures that the conference will be engaging for our keynote speakers, presenters, and delegates, allowing them to actively contribute to research outputs such as published papers, case studies, and best practices," she stated.

Prof. Zodwa Thembelihle Motsa Madikane, Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement, and Student Support at UNISA, kicked off the conference with a keynote address titled "Navigating the Future of the Global South: Bridging Higher Education, Crisis, and Global Equality through the Integration of Digital and Indigenous Knowledge for Africa's Epistemic Revolution."



From left: Dr Xolani Khohliso, Head: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director: Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, Prof. Annah Vimbai Bengesai, Director: Teaching and Learning Unit, UKZN; Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Zodwa Motsa Madikane, Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement and Student Support, UNISA; Prof. Wendy Setlalentoa, acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Prof. Emmanuel Magwashu, Director: Centre for Higher Education Professional Development, NWU and Prof. Ermien van Pletzen, CUT Coach - Siyaphumelela Project.

"As an academic fraternity in South African higher education, we have two challenges. The one challenge is taking advantage of the upsurge of technology that has swept all areas of the academic enterprise, particularly higher education. How do we carry the students along so that they can embrace this technology? And the second challenge affects a section of our society, the African section. It's a major challenge in the sense that the section of society is immersed in Western knowledge. It speaks English better than English professors. It triumphs, it does a whole lot of things, and yet, its own knowledge systems do not find relevance in the classroom. They go into the classroom with all the Western knowledge that we have all been taught, and some of us are so specialised in it that we are professors of English. But when they go home, they have umalume; a grandmother and a community that has over thousands of years of knowledge that does not find its place in the curricula they encounter in class; so, what are we teaching here? What are we creating here? Are we creating a community of practitioners that can fit in Asia, in England, in Germany, but not as itself?" asked Prof. Motsa Madikane as she encouraged delegates to engage in discussions and research on the matter.

Since its inception, the mission of SoTL has been to improve the quality of teaching and learning through systematic inquiry of research, encourage academics to reflect on their practices through research, academic staff to actively contribute to the ongoing conversation about teaching and learning in the disciplines; contribute to increasing research outputs for the institution; and create groups of Communities of Practices (COPs) to work on specific domains of learning and teaching.

Academic Programmes

CUT receives full accreditation for HR Programme from SABPP



Mr Lyle Markham South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) board member and Dr Lineo Dzansi, Head of Department of Business Management.

The Department of Business Management in the Faculty of Management Sciences has achieved a significant milestone with the full accreditation of its Human Resources Management (HRM) programme by the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP). This achievement not only signifies CUT's commitment to delivering quality education and building strategic partnerships but also highlights its pivotal role in shaping the future of HR profession in South Africa. The SABPP accreditation, which was first granted, expired in 2019.

In October 2023, the SABPP reviewed all 6 HR programmes to assess whether the curriculum meets current academic standards and reflects the best practices in HR, specifically to ensure that academic quality is maintained at CUT. This was done to ensure that the programmes offered enhance student outcomes and foster continuous improvement.

"Today, our university proudly accepts the well-deserved accreditation certificate, a testament to the hard work, dedication, and unwavering pursuit of excellence. This achievement reflects CUT's commitment to upholding the integrity and effectiveness of its HR programmes. The newly awarded certificate will serve as a lasting reminder of this commitment, reinforcing the university's dedication to ensuring that its programmes are not only relevant but aligned with the evolving needs of the HR profession," said Dr Lineo Dzanzi Head of Department of Business Management.

The SABPP, established in 1982, serves as the professional and statutory quality assurance body for HRM learning programmes in South Africa. It plays a crucial role in professionalising the HR function, ensuring that HR becomes a recognised and respected profession. The accreditation process involves rigorous evaluations of academic programmes to ensure they meet current standards and best practices in HR, thereby enhancing student outcomes and encouraging continuous improvement.

CUT launches Atleha Programme to support students through their academic journey



From left: Ms. Kgomotso Malele of the Saville Foundation, Professor Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director: Center for Innovation Learning and Teaching (CILT) and Dr Charlotte Nunes, Director: Student Academic Development and Support.

CUT formally debuted the Atleha (Success) initiative, created in collaboration with the SAVILLE Foundation on 17 July 2024. The Atleha programme supports CUT students' learning potential and beliefs by providing them with the necessary resources, experiences, and abilities to support successful, all-around student growth.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof. Pamela Dube was ecstatic to announce the program's objective, which she said is to guide students on a greater path to becoming capable, accountable, and self-aware individuals in their academic journey. "This will be accomplished by holding several sessions and counting the problems that our students have," she said.

Prof. Dube also mentioned how the Kresge Foundation provided funds to support the Siyaphumulela Student Success Programme, encouraging academic advancement by introducing challenging but highly effective modules. "The university's aspirational aims of expanding and strengthening its institutional ability to guarantee that the student support system is in place to manage our intervention techniques that will assist academic progression effectively are the driving force for this launch." She added.

Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director: Center for Innovation Learning and Teaching (CILT), said that the program will enable students to take charge of their learning journeys and foster resilience, creativity, and other leadership skills that will be guarded from the programme to inspire and create a sense of ownership and active participation in the learning process. "The CUT and SAVILLE foundation's partnership will produce transformative results, giving aspiring leaders the abilities and perspective needed to prosper in a world that is changing quickly."

Ms. Kgomotso Malele from the SAVILLE Foundation encouraged students to take advantage of the programme and be active participants for their academic success. "To succeed, one must overcome every obstacle that they face."

CUT Inaugurates Prof. Alfred Makura as Full Professor in Educational Management, Law, and Research



Prof. David Ngidi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Dr Mantoa Molete, acting Dean: Humanities, Prof. Alfred Makura newly inaugurated Full Professor, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal and Prof. Samson Mashele, acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement.

CUT celebrated the inauguration of Prof. Alfred Makura as a full professor. Prof. Makura delivered his inaugural address titled, "Women in Education Leadership: Proselytising Masculinity and the Ethic of Care Conundrum," where he explored the complexities of gender dynamics in educational leadership.

Prof Makura, who is now a full professor in Educational Management, Law, and Research has an impressive academic background. His previous roles include senior academic development practitioner and acting manager at the University of Fort Hare. With numerous publications, including books, book chapters, and conference papers, his research interests are deeply rooted in female educational leadership, teacher education, curriculum development, gender studies, and higher education.

His passion for education extends beyond the classroom, as he believes it equips individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to address contemporary societal challenges such as gender discrimination, toxic masculinity, COVID-19, patriarchy, unethical leadership, and gender disparities.

In her welcome address, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube, accentuated the significance of the inaugural lecture, stating that it is not just a formality but a significant function where academics are acknowledged and recognised for their prowess as researchers of note in their respective fields. "It is an important intellectual discourse that will shape the future of the higher education sector. The insights shared tonight will guide us on our journey to inspire our teaching, learning, research and innovation, as well as our scholarship of engagement."

Prof. Dube also highlighted the relevance of the lecture to Women's Month celebrations and the national theme of celebrating 30 years of democracy towards women's development. "We are eager to learn how your extensive research work can best align with CUT and be embedded in our thoughts and practices. I am certain that your lecture will help us reimagine the role of CUT and its relevance to gender-sensitive curricula and the upliftment of women as we build an inclusive university based on the principles of equity and excellence," she said

Professor Alfred Makura, an outstanding scholar in educational leadership and management, addressed predicaments faced by women in the Southern African education sector, particularly within leadership roles

Prof. Makura highlighted how societal and institutional factors contribute to the marginalisation of women in educational leadership. He stated that the entrenched notions of masculinity within educational settings significantly hinder women's vertical mobility. "Masculinity is engendered by society, policymakers and institutions and has tended to impede the vertical mobility of women in most education systems."

The lecture explored the unique qualities of female educational leaders, emphasising the "Ethic of Care" that women often bring to their roles. "This concept is evident through four leadership dimensions: instructional management, leadership styles and behaviours, school climate, and routine school administration and management."

Using a mixed-methodological approach, he incorporated quantitative data from psychometric instruments such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). "These tools helped assess the psychological gender orientation of school heads and their perceived leadership styles," he said.

A significant point of discussion was the paradox between the leadership styles exhibited by women and the traditional expectations associated with gender roles. "While women often embody nurturing and collaborative leadership qualities, these attributes can sometimes clash with the prevailing masculine leadership models."

To bridge the gender gap in educational leadership, Prof. Makura proposed several strategies, including the development of gendersensitive curricula and inclusive pedagogical practices. He emphasised the importance of appointing women to decision-making positions, arguing that such practices are not only justifiable but necessary for the advancement of the education sector in Southern Africa.

Inaugural Address Highlights Service Learning's Role in Revitalising South Africa's "Rainbow Nation"



Prof. Wendy Setlalentoe, Dean: Humanities, Prof. Alfred Ngowi, DVC: Research Innovation and Engagement, newly inaugurated Prof. Gregg Alexander, Prof. David Ngidi, DVC: Teaching and Learning and Dr Sally Dzingwa, Registrar.

On 31 October 2024, the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), celebrated and inaugurated Prof. Gregg Alexandra into a full professorship tittle. In a powerful inaugural address titled "Realising/Revitalising the Rainbow Nation: Service Learning in Advancing Social Cohesion in Diverse and Multicultural Educational Settings," Prof. Gregg Alexandra tackled one of South Africa's most enduring social aspirations: the pursuit of a united, non-racial society. Reflecting on South Africa's journey since the historic 1994 elections, which indicated a democratic society committed to equality and equity, Prof. Alexandra urged the nation to revisit and strengthen its commitment to the ideals of the "rainbow nation."

In his welcome address acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the time, Prof. David Ngidi emphasised the significance of celebrating the university's distinguished academics. He described the inauguration as a formal academic session of the senate that serves to recognise the accomplishments of the University's academics as researchers in their respective fields. Prof. Ngidi expressed enthusiasm for Prof. Alexander's lecture, stating that the exploration of issues such as social cohesion, multi-cultural education, diverse learning contexts, and the promises of service learning contribute immensely to the core mission of teaching, research, and community engagement.

In his address, Prof. Alexandra acknowledged the significant progress South Africa has made over the past 29 years, especially in areas like sports, science, and the arts, where the country has demonstrated its diverse strengths on global stages. However, he also highlighted the recent and ongoing challenges ranging from xenophobia and racism to economic disparity and moral decay which threaten to undermine social cohesion and trust within the country. According to Prof. Alexandra, these issues signal a need for a deeper, more intentional understanding of what true social cohesion entails.

He elaborated on the challenges faced by the South African educational institutions, using schools as examples of the lack of social cohesion and the need for inclusive teaching methods. "Our educational structures, across all racial groups, fall short in integrating and supporting learners from diverse backgrounds. Achieving the full potential of a unified rainbow nation requires a deeper understanding of what social cohesion means and how it can be enhanced."

Central to his address was the concept of using education to promote social cohesion. He argued that education has the power to drive transformation within diverse and deracialised spaces, recognising that post-apartheid educational settings still grapple with incidences of racism, discriminatory practices, cultural misunderstandings, high levels of inequality, and social injustices.

Prof. Alexander concluded by sharing practical insights from his experience incorporating service learning into a BEd Honours module on the Psychology of Education. He explained that service learning is uniquely positioned to foster social cohesion because it encourages students to engage with diverse communities, promoting empathy and understanding. He believes that this approach is essential to advancing social cohesion, helping South Africa move closer to the ideals embodied by the "rainbow nation."

Prof. Yali Woyessa Celebrates Full Professorship and Advocates for Sustainable Water Management



Prof. Yali Woyessa (center) with family from left: Mrs Heleni Wolde-Giorgis (wife) and Dr Nemera Shargie (friend).

On 30 July 2024, the Central University of Technology marked a significant milestone in Prof. Yali Woyessa's academic career, celebrating his promotion to full professor. Prof. Woyessa, a distinguished figure in the Department of Civil Engineering and the Assistant Dean: Research, Innovation, and Engagement in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology, delivered an inaugural address on a topic of profound importance: "Sustainable Water Resources Management in the 21st Century: Challenges and Innovations."

His address highlighted the critical role of Water Resource Management (WRM) in sustaining life, supporting economic development, and maintaining ecosystem health. "Water resources management is critical for sustaining life, supporting economic development, and maintaining ecosystem health. The significance of this field has shaped my professional journey," he stated.

He took the audience on a historical water management journey, emphasising how it has evolved through significant milestones and paradigm shifts from ancient irrigation systems to modern integrated water resource management. "Learning from past successes and failures is essential for addressing contemporary challenges," he added.

When discussing the 21st-century challenges, Prof. Woyessa pointed out the rising global water demand due to population growth and urbanisation, aggravated by climate change, which increases water scarcity and variability. "Pollution and declining water quality further threaten freshwater resources, compounded by the over-extraction of groundwater. These issues have profound social and economic implications, particularly for vulnerable communities."

He also highlighted the significant role of innovation in overcoming these challenges. "Technological advancements in water monitoring and assessment, sustainable infrastructure, and the application of data science and artificial intelligence are transforming water management practices. Collaboration between water managers, policymakers, scientists, and the community fosters comprehensive solutions. Effective governance and community engagement are also vital for sustainable practices and informed decision-making."

When reflecting on his research contributions, he stated that he has focused on understanding the challenges, such as climate change, population growth, and land use change, and developing innovative solutions and strategies for sustainable water resources management. "By integrating transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration, my work aims to address critical issues in water scarcity."

Looking to the future, Prof. Woyessa highlighted areas for further research, including ecosystem services, nature-based solutions, and enhancing international collaboration. "Globally, sustainable water resources management requires international collaboration and effective governance. Comparative analyses of regional strategies reveal diverse approaches and opportunities for global collaboration. By sharing knowledge and resources, the global community can address water challenges more effectively and ensure a sustainable future for all."

CUT Celebrates the 2024 Spring Graduations



CUT Council member and one of the 28 doctoral candidates, Dr Itumeleng Phage, congratulated by Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

On 06 September 2024, the Central University of Technology (CUT) celebrated the achievement of 695 graduates who walked the aisle to receive their well-deserved qualifications. These graduates represented a diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds, with 39 master's and 28 PhDs. This marked the highest number of doctorates awarded in a single graduation ceremony in the university's history.

Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, applauded the exceptional leadership within the Faculty of Management Sciences and commended Prof. Albert Strydom, Dean of the Faculty, and Prof. Dennis Dzansi, Director of Entrepreneurship Development Unit (CUT-EDU), for their efforts in strengthening international partnerships. "Our collaboration with universities in Ghana has been instrumental in creating opportunities for our university. We proudly conferred 13 PhDs from the Faculty of Management Sciences alone."

She also highlighted the university's 20 years of growth, innovation, and significant impact. Since its declaration as a University of Technology in 2004, the university has produced approximately 66,000 graduates, demonstrating its substantial contribution to the province and the country.

Prof. Dube further congratulated the PhD recipients, with special recognition to Dr Itumeleng Phage, who is also a Council member. She expressed confidence in the graduates' potential to positively impact the world.

"As you embark on your professional journey, this university will forever remain your intellectual home, providing opportunities for demand-driven postgraduate programmes. With the valuable skills you have acquired, tailored to meet societal needs, your communities eagerly await your input, energy, and expertise. Your role is crucial, and we believe in your ability to contribute significantly to uplifting your communities. Our commitment to your success extends far beyond this day. Wherever you go, always remember where you come from," she said.

CUT Celebrates the 2024 Spring Graduations

Faculty of Built Environment and Information Technology

Doctor of Engineering in Civil Engineering



Dr Asantewaa-Tannor Patricia MSc (KNU)

Promoter: Prof. FA Emuze, PhD (NMU)

Co-promoter: Prof. DK Das, PhD (IIT)

Topic: "An evaluation of the performance and sustainability of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) programme in Ghana"

In her research, she addressed the sparse empirical data on the effects of implementation activities on improving the performance of the Community-Led Total Sanitation programme, which significantly drives sustainable behavioural change in open defecation-free (ODF) communities.

The study produced a framework that provides empirical evidence that leadership, ownership, motivation, commitment, and financial and behavioural change significantly drive the performance and sustainability of the programme and ODF communities. The research was shared with peers in a Scopus-indexed journal and two international conference papers.

Doctor of Engineering in Civil Engineering



Dr. Fondjo Takoukam, Armand Augustin, MEng (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. E Theron, PhD (UFS)

Co-promoter: Prof. RP Ray, PhD (UM)

Topic: "Characterisation of shear stress properties of impacted unsaturated heaving soils"

Dr Armand Augustin Fondjo developed predictive shear-strength constitutive relations and associated models for compacted unsaturated expansive soils. The findings revealed that the influence of swelling stress on the compacted unsaturated expansive soils' shear strength enhances the foundations' design and constructions' durability. The developments explored in his research contribute significantly to advances in unsaturated soil mechanics, a new field in geotechnical engineering. The findings were published in two international conference proceedings, ten Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)-accredited international journals, and two book chapters. His study is well-researched, with a novelty contribution to the body of knowledge.

Faculty of Built Environment and Information Technology

Doctor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering Doctor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering



Dr Bokopane Lindiwe MTech Doctor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering

Promoter: Prof. K Kusakana, D.Tech [CUT)

Co-promoter: Prof. IH Vermaak, PhD (Twente)

Topic: "Control and optimal management of hybrid PV-Wind integrated charging station for electric vehicles"

Dr. Lindiwe Bokopane's doctoral study addresses the challenges posed by inadequate power systems in the country, and the need to develop sustainable charging solutions for electric vehicles. The study thus developed two novel mathematical models-an openloop control strategy; and closed-loop Nodel Predictive Control (MPC) optimization of a hybrid smart grid with photovoltaic (PV) wind and energy storage, incorporating demand-side management, a peer-to-peer charging scheme, and the charging station's profitability.

The results of the study revealed that the developed models skillfully managed the charging and discharging of the storage, as well as the power distribution from the arid. PV and wind, within viable limits. The findings of this research were presented in five articles published in Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)-accredited international conference and journals papers.



Dr Odufuwa Olumuyiwa Yinus Meng (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. K Kusakana, D.Tech (CUT)

Co-promoter: Dr BP Numbi, PhD [UP]

Co-promoter: Prof. L Tartibu, PhD (CPUT)

Topic: "Optimal energy management of the ice thermal storagebased air conditioning system for commercial buildings with a solar photovoltaic system"

Dr Olumuyiwa Yinus Odufuwa's doctoral study addressed the challenge of optimizing the energy efficiency of buildings' cooling systems. The study developed novel mathematical models for integrating ice thermal energy storage (ITES) with renewable energy (RE) sources, considering time-of-use (ToU) tariff regions to minimise energy costs.

The models were developed using an artificial neural network (ANN) for prediction, and mixed-integer programming (MIP) problems solved using the Solving Constraint Integer Programs (SCIP) solver. The results of the study revealed an economic analysis projecting a payback within two years, achieving reasonable energy cost savings, and maintaining thermal comfort.

The findings of this research were presented in three articles published in Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)accredited journals, one national and one international conference paper.

The faculty of Management Sciences

Doctor of Business Administration



Dr Strampe Stefan Anton M. Com (UFS)

Promoter: Prof P Rambe, PhD (UCT)

Co-promoter: Dr K Booysen, PhD (UFS)

Topic: "Effects of selected Fourth Industrial Revolution skills on entrepreneurial readiness behaviour: The mediation of the entrepreneurial process"

With his thesis, Dr Strampe contributed to entrepreneurial research by explaining the mechanisms through which Fourth Industrial Resolution (4IR) skills interact with the entrepreneurial process in shaping entrepreneurial readiness behaviours. Applying Human Capital Theory; a deductive approach; and student samples from two South African universities, Strampe investigated the effect of 4IR skills on students' entrepreneurial readiness behaviours, and the extent to which the entrepreneurial process mediates the relationship. The results suggest the entrepreneurial process dimensions' full and partial mediation of the relationships between 4IR skills and entrepreneurial readiness behaviours.

Positive, statistically significant relationships between all 4IR skills and entrepreneurial readiness behaviour dimensions were also established. In addition to providing an integrative model for explaining entrepreneurial readiness behaviours, his study also contributes to explaining the nuanced mechanisms through which the entrepreneurial process shapes entrepreneurial readiness behaviours. These insights are useful for education practitioners implementing behavioural strategies to equip students with the necessary 4IR skill sets.

Doctor of Human Resource Management



Dr Mothepane Seghobane Bokaba MSHR (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. D Kokt, DTech (CUT)

Topic: "The impact of remote working and psychological weebeing on organisational citizenship behaviour: The moderate effect of psychological capital"

Given the massive technological advancement and lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, hre study focused on the impact of remote and hybrid work, as well as psychological well-being, on organisational citizenship behaviour, with the moderating effect of the psychological capital.

Results derived from structural equation modelling showed that psychological well-being and psychological capital have a high predictive power towards organisational citizenship behaviour. Similarly, the benefits of remote and hybrid work, and psychological capital, had a high predictive power towards psychological well-being. Examiners praised the depth and scholarly engagement shown by the candidate and the study's contribution to the field of human resource management.



Dr Afrifa Sampson Inr MPhil (UG)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-supervisor: Dr TC Dzogbewu, DEng (CUT)

Co-supervisor: Prof. DI de Beer, DTech (CUT)

Topic: "An explanatory structural model of employee job performance in the 3D printing environment"

In this study, Dr Sampson Afrifa Inr examined the direct and moderating relationships between leader emotional intelligence, leader emotional behaviour, organisational emotional climate, and employee job performance amongst 3D-printing firms in South Africa. The study was motivated by limited managerial research related to the 3D-printing environment in South Africa.

The study revealed significant positive relationships between leader emotional intelligence, leader emotional behaviour, organisational emotional climate, and employee job performance amongst 3D-printing firms. Organisational emotional climate moderated the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and employee job performance amongst 3D-printing firms in South Africa. The study contributes to managerial research in South Africa's 3D-printing industry and emphasises the importance of emotional intelligence as a strategic managerial asset that can improve employees' job performance.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Business Management)



Dr Aabanu Gameli Prosper MBA (KNU)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Topic: "Evaluation of the impact of Ghana's Planting for Food and lobe program on small-scale farmer market linkage access in the Volta Region"

In this study, Dr. Prosper evaluated Chana's Plantina for Food and lobs (PFI) programme's effectiveness in improving marketing opportunities for small-scale rural farmers.

The findings reveal market information services, transportation and logistics support, farmer organizations community market days, processing centres, farmer field days, and trade fairs as crucial elements promoting market access for smallholder farmers under the PFI programme. The results also reveal that participation in PFI notably increases farmers' profitability by 28.2%, suggesting enhanced economic benefits from the programme. The research enriches knowledge of development programme conceptualization and management and informs policy formulation and implementation.



Dr. Akotia Michael Worlanyo MBA (KNU)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-promoter: Prof. P Rambe, PhD (UCT)

Co-promoter: Prof. EK Sakyi, PhD (University of Manchester)

Topic: "The effects of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviour in the Ghanaian hospitality industry with the mediated moderation effects of individual and organisational factors"

In this study, Dr. Michael Akotia examined the direct and indirect influences of a transformational leadership style on innovative work behaviour. The mediating factors considered were work engagement, self-efficiency, and organisational innovation atmosphere, whilst absorptive capacity represented the moderating variable. There is a lack of clarity about the interaction of these variables in the Ghanaian hospitality industry in translating the individual energies of employees into organisational innovation.

The study reveals the significant relationship amongst the variables. It established that engaged and assertive employees operating under transformational leaders and in a conducive, creative climate can learn, absorb and apply knowledge, and exhibit innovative work behaviour, for an organisational competitive edge in the marketplace. The study contributes to organisational innovation in theory, policy and practice.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Business Management)



Dr Asiedu-Nketiah Kwaku MSc (Heriot-Watt University)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-promoter: Dr YA Yakubu, PhD (CPUT)

Topic: "The nexus among corporate board characteristics, governance practices and performance of state-owned enterprises in Chana"

Despite the recognised importance of effective corporate governance in enhancing the performance of State-owned Enterprises (SoEs), there is a lack of empirical research that examines the specific dynamics in the Ghanaian context. In his study, Dr. Kwaku Asiedu-Nketiah not only explored the direct influence of corporate board characteristics on SoE's economic performance, but also examined the influence of corporate governance practices on SoE's economic performance and ascertained the impact of corporate board characteristics on SoE's economic performance via corporate governance practices.

The study revealed that the cognitive characteristics of board members, as represented by their educational qualifications and career experience, do not significantly impact the economic performance of SoEs in Ghana. Also, the level of board accountability is not a significant factor that affects the economic performance of SoEs in Ghana as far as Return on Assets (RoA) is concerned.



Dr Fianko Samuel Koranteng MBA (Blekinge Institute of Technology)

Promoter: Prof. CC Chipunza, DTech (NMU)

Co-promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Topic: "Impact of the interaction among emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and organisational climate on job satisfaction: case of selected youth-owned and managed small businesses in Ghana"

In this study, Dr. Samuel Koranteng Fianko explored the interactive effect of organisational climate, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence on employee job satisfaction amonast youth-owned and managed small businesses (YOMSB) in Ghana. Management challenges in YOMSB have hindered Chana's economic development and youth employment.

The study revealed that organisational climate, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence directly and indirectly affect employee job satisfaction in YOMSB. It was also established that job satisfaction is enhanced when organisational climate is positive, and leaders demonstrate transformational qualities and possess a high level of emotional intelligence. However, transformational leadership unexpectedly moderated the climate satisfaction relationship negatively.

Using a mixed-method approach, the research provides insights for improving YOMSB management practices. The study contributes to organisational behaviour theory, leadership theory, and small business management practice in developing economies.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Business Management)



Dr Honu Edem Kodzo MA (University of Ghana, Legon)

Promoter: Dr LW Dzansi, DTech (CUT)

Co-promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Topic: "Diversity-oriented Human Resource management, practices and organisational citizenship behaviour of staff of academic tertiary institutions in Ghana: a justice and happiness perspective"

The inconclusiveness of diversity management studies presents a significant problem in understanding the true impact of human resource diversity management practices within organisations. In this study, Dr. Edem Kodzo Honu empirically examined how diversityoriented human resource management practices affect employee attitudes such as organisational citizenship behaviours, organisational justice perception, and employee's happiness within the tertiary education sector in Chana.

The study revealed that diversity-oriented human resource management practices significantly influence organizational citizenship behaviour, and directly affect organisational justice perception and employees' happiness at work. It was further confirmed that organisational justice perception also directly affects organisational citizenship behaviour and employees' happiness at work. The study contributes to diversity management and human resource diversity management theory, policy and practice.



Dr Prempeh Emmanuel Barima Agyemang MBA (University of Cape Town)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Topic: "Impact of university social responsibility on staff work engagement: A study in Ghana"

The failure of a university to meet its ternal and external obligations could be detrimental to employees' work engagement. Moreover, there is a gap in understanding the relationship between social responsibility and work engagement in Ghana higher education context. In this study, Dr. Emmanuel Barima Agyemang Prempeh explored the impact of university social responsibility (USR) on staff engagement at Ghanaian universities.

The study found that external social responsibility activities have a positive impact on work engagement amongst employees. It was also found that employees' emotional commitment positively affects their work engagement in a significant manner. Furthermore. the study uncovered that engaging in internal social responsibility activities is crucial in improving employees' sense of belonging at universities, positively impacting employee work committee. This study contributes to understanding how social responsibility initiatives can enhance employee engagement, leading to improved organisational performance and productivity.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Finance)



Dr Agbemava Edinam MBA (University of Hull, UK)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-supervisor: Dr TC Dzogbewu, DEng (CUT)

Co-supervisor: Prof. DI de Beer, DTech (CUT)

Topic: "Financial management practices, sources of finance and the performance of 3D printing SMMES in South Africa"

In this study, Dr. Edinam Agbemava explored the role of financial management practices and sources of finance on the performance of 3D-printing small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa. The capital-intensive nature of the 3Dprinting business and the emerging landscape of the 3D-printing industry necessitated the need for this study.

The study demonstrated that working capital and liquidity management oractices greatly profitability and increase the client base of 3D-printing SMMEs in South Africa. The study further revealed that equity financing, debt financing, funding from family and friends, and personal savings have varying impacts on profitability and increase in client base amongst 3D-printing SMMEs. The study contributes to the theory, policy and practice of financial management amongst 3D-printing SMMEs in South Africa.

(Marketing Management)



Dr Adokou Faustin Apeletey MBA (GIMPAP)

Promoter: Dr OD Onojaefe, DTech (CPUT)

Co-supervisor: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-promoter: Dr EO Amoakoh, DManSi (CUT)

Topic: "Agricultural technology adoption among smallholder commercial farmers in rural Ghana: a consumer behaviour perspective"

Despite the great benefits of adopting improved agricultural technology, research elsewhere shows that most farmers are reluctant to embrace it, resulting in food insecurity, poor quality products, and unprofitable farming. Based on behavioral perspectives, Dr. Faustian examined Ghanaian smallholder farmers' adoption of agricultural technology to understand opportunities for sustainable food production and develop a strategy for adopting technology.

The results showed that collaboration and consideration of farmers' consumer behaviour characteristics in designing and implementing agricultural technology adoption programmes lead to increased willingness to adopt it. The study also revealed that appropriate marketing strategy influences technology adoption. The study enriches marketing theory in general, and consumer behaviour specifically. One paper from the study was published in a Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)accredited journal, whilst two others are under review for publication.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Marketing Management)



Dr Agyeman-duah Matthew Opoku MA (ARU)

Promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-promoter: Dr OD Onojaefe, DTech (CPUT)

Co-promoter: Dr EO Amoakoh, DManSi (CUT)

Topic: "Destination image of selected tourist sites in the Volta Region of Chana and the future behavioural intentions of international tourists'

In this study, Dr. Matthew explored the destination image of selected tourist sites in the Volta region of Chana, investigating its impact on the future behavioural intentions of international tourists. The study integrates the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) with destination image to predict intentions.

The findings highlight a strong correlation between the perceived destination image and tourist attitudes towards behavioural intentions. Furthermore, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control influence tourists' intentions to return to, and recommend, the destination. However, the study reveals that infrastructure improvement and better information dissemination could enhance perceived behavioural control.

This research provides critical insights for policymakers, tourism marketers, and local businesses in the Volta region. It offers them strategies to improve their destination marketing efforts, strengthen the local tourism industry, and, consequently, positively shape the future behavioral intentions of international tourists.

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Marketing Management)



Dr Glate Stanley Nelvis MPhil (University of Ghana, Legon)

Promoter: Dr OD Onojaefe, DTech (CPUT)

Co-promoter: Prof. DY Dzansi, PhD (UP)

Co-promoter: Dr EO Amoakoh, DManSi (CUT)

Topic: "A consumer behaviour model for voters in Chana"

In this study, Dr. Stanley Nelvis Glate examined evidence of political marketing, more specifically consumer-oriented political marketing, to develop a consumer behaviour model for voters in Ghana. A consumer behaviour model is represented to guide political party campaign strategy, for success and victory at the poll. Voter apathy and dissatisfaction regarding poor service delivery, and good governance, remain a concern for both political parties and voters in Ghana.

The study revealed opportunities for political marketing and change in voter behaviour. The model shows that success in a political marketing campaign would be determined by a campaign message that is responsive and proactive to voters' needs. The study contributes to existing traditional marketing-related theories in the political realm, to better understand voting behaviour from a marketing perspective, thus expanding the application of psychosocial theory into marketing and political science, enriching the fledgling field of political marketing.

Faculty of Health & Environmental Sciences

Doctor of Health Sciences in Biomedical Technology



Dr. Setlal, Mojalefa Brian, MTech (CUT)

Promoter: Dr P Kendrekar, PhD (NUT)

Co-promoter: Dr LF Mogogoa, DHSc (CUT)

Co-promoter: Prof. SS Mashele, PhD (Medunsa)

Co-promoter: Prof. M Nyanga, PhD (Medunsa)

Topic: "Designing novel inhibitors for Mycobacterium tuberculosis by targeting InhA and KasA using ligand-based drug discovery"

Dr Setlai's research investigated the potential of various thiolactomycin derivatives as antituberculosis drugs, with two enzymes – fatty-acid enoyl-acyl carrier protein reductase (inhA) and beta-ketoacyl-ACP synthase (kasA), which are involved in mycolic acid synthesis – as drug targets. The key findings from the study demonstrated a multidisciplinary approach to developing novel inhibitors for Mycobacterium tuberculosis. Two novel drug candidates, GPK91 and GPK96, were identified as potential inhibitors. The GPK91 may act as an inhA protein inhibitor, whilst GPK96 may act as a kasA protein inhibitor by targeting different amino acid residues. GPK91 and GPK96 are promising candidates for novel antimycobacterial drug prescreening.

Doctor of Health Sciences in Biomedical Technology



Dr. khasapane, Ntelekwane George, MTech (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. MMO Thekisoe, PhD (Gifu University)

Co-promoter: Dr SJ Nkhebenyane, PhD (CUT)

Topic: "Molecular characterisation, antimicrobial resistance and virulence genotyping of Staphylococcus isolates from subclinical mastitis dairy cows in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality, South Africa"

Dr. Ntelekwane George Khasapane's PhD study, titled "Molecular characterization, antimicrobial resistance and virulence genotyping of Staphylococcus isolates from subclinical mastitis dairy cows in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality, South Africa", documented the prevalence of subclinical mastitis in dairy cows, antimicrobial resistance, and virulence profiles of Staphylococcus bacteria, which are pathogens of public health concern. Using whole genome sequencing, the study detected novel sequencing types of these zoonotic bacteria. One external examiner commented that "... this is an excellent and a well-executed thesis. Furthermore, the thesis was honoured with four peer reviewed publications. This is an excellent accomplishment and a well-earned PhD".

Doctor of Health Sciences in Biomedical Technology



Dr. Mugudamani, Innocent, MHSc (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. SA Oke, PhD (UFS)

Promoter: Dr TP Gumede, PhD (UFS)

Topic: "Environmental health risk assessment of potential emerging contaminants identified from water sources around Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa"

Dr. Innocent Mugudamani's thesis focused on the environmental health risks of emerging contaminants (EC) in water sources in the Mangaung region. The study discovered that aquatic species and residents of Mangaung are exposed to, and consuming, organic compounds such as steroid hormones, herbicides, and pharmaceutical and personal care products. These ECs in water sources are likely to cause high environmental and human health risks (carcinogenic). To address the environmental health risks posed by ECs, the study pinpointed their sources, and recommended mitigation measures that could enable effective management. The generated data sets in this study are essential for developing regulations and national guidelines to safeguard public health. Five Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)-accredited publications emanated from the study, in the form of a book, book chapter, and journal articles.

Faculty Humanities

Doctor of Education



Dr Chasokela, Doris, MEng (Southwest Jiaotong University)

Promoter: Dr CS Masoabi, PhD (UFS)

Co-promoter: Prof. AH Makura, PhD (UFH)

Topic: "Framework for implementing stem learning technologies to alleviate students' challenges of the 21st century skills at a Zimbabwean university"

Dr. Doris Chasokela is a senior lecturer at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Zimbabwe. She obtained an undergraduate degree in technical education in electrical and electronics engineering at NUST in Zimbabwe. She further obtained the Master of Engineering Electrical Systems Control and Information Technology at Southwest Jiaotong University in China in 2012. She has now completed the Doctor of Education at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) in Bloemfontein, South Africa, under the supervision of Dr Charles Masoabi and Prof. Alfred Makura. Her thesis is titled "Framework for implementing STEM Learning Technologies to alleviate Students' challenges of 21st-century skills at a Zimbabwean university". She has published papers in journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters.

Doctor of Education



Dr Hlojeng, 'Mampaga Anna, Med (NUL)

Promoter: Prof. AH Makura, PhD (UFH)

Co-promoter: Prof. JM Palmer, PhD (NWU)

Topic: "High school management teams' mechanisms for supporting vulnerable learners in their academic work: a comparative study of Lesotho and South Africa"

Dr Mampaqa Anna Hlojeng's groundbreaking comparative thesis argues for a built-in resilient relationship between schools and communities to mitigate factors and challenges encountered by vulnerable learners in Lesotho and South Africa. Grounded in the interpretive paradigm and informed by contingency theory, 'Mampaqa's study proposes a School Bus Model that empowers school management teams (SMTs)/school business managers (SBMs) and school governing bodies (SGBs) to deal with vulnerable learners by obliterating the superior-inferior dichotomy in school management. Graphic narratives of sampled vulnerable learners make a case for strengthening school-community relations. Three articles were harvested and published from this thesis.

Doctor of Education



Dr Lamola, Malesela Jacob, MM (WITS)

Promoter: Dr KM Kimanzi, PhD (UKZN)

Topic: "Re-thinking management of school business partnerships: A case of Limpopo area of South Africa"

Dr Malesela Jacob Lamola's study examined interconnection in the management of school-business partnerships, which are collaborative arrangements between educational institutions and businesses that are aimed at enhancing the quality of education. The study developed a guiding framework that can be adopted to guide these partnerships in leveraging the business community's resources, expertise and networks to assist schools in different capacities.

Doctor of Education



Doctor of Education



Dr Mofoka, Jerry George, M.Ed. (CPUT)

Promoter: Dr MC Mokhampanyane, D.Ed. (CUT)

Co-Promoter: Dr MS Motsoeneng, PhD (UFS)

Topic: "Implementing effective instructional leadership in township secondary schools in the Western Cape: A proposed framework."

Dr Jerry George Mofoka's study explored strategies for the implementation of effective instructional leadership in township secondary schools. Critical emancipatory research (CER) was used as a framework to guide the study, whilst participatory action research (PAR) was used as methodology. The study identified that instructional leadership is a collaborative effort that requires all stakeholders to work together. The Department of Basic Education should establish academies in every province, where all aspiring and serving principals could be trained in all aspects of school leadership.

Dr Teba Teba, Nthabiseng Clementine, Med (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. AH Makura, PhD (UFH)

Co-promoter: Dr RW Thabane, PhD (CUT)

Topic: "The role of female instructional leadership in learners' academic achievement at high school: A comparative study of Lesotho and South Africa"

Dr Clementina Teba-Teba's research compared how Lesotho and South African female principals exercised their instructional leadership in learners' academic achievement in leadership dimensions. Framed within the instructional leadership and liberal feminism theories, she demonstrated the centrality of equality in educational leadership. Not only men are capable when it comes to high leadership positions; women are too. The study concluded that females are better instructional leaders. Whilst females find solace in the equal rights domain of constitutions, males tend to exercise exclusive power in leadership positions regarded as being high, and where strategic traits are needed.

Doctor of Education



Dr Marumo, Jack Mathoga, MEd (CUT)

Promoter: Prof. MK Mhlolo, PhD (WITS)

Co-promoter: Dr L Kalobo, PhD (UFS)

Topic: "Developing teacher training programs for high school teachers of mathematically gifted learners in South Africa"

In 2001, gifted education was proposed as a solution to the country's mathematics crisis. It failed to take off, mainly because teachers were never trained on giftedness. Dr Jack Mathoga Marumo's doctoral study aimed to fill this gap. Gifted experts were interviewed in the United States of America (USA), and seven exemplary programmes in the USA, Australia, Singapore and South Africa were analysed. The triangulation of methods resulted in the proposal of a teacher training programme with seven units.

Two keynote addresses and six papers at international and local conferences emanated from the study. Jack is now an executive member of the International Group for Mathematical Creativity and Giftedness (MCG) – recognition that few, if any, students have achieved.

Doctor of Education



Dr Phage, Itumeleng Barnard, MSc (NWU)

Promoter: Prof. MP Rankhumise, DEd (UNIZULU)

Co-promoter: Dr L Kalobo, PhD (UFS)

Topic: "Physical sciences teachers' and learners' perceptions on the content knowledge and conceptual understanding of graphs in algebra and kinematics"

Dr Itumeleng Phage's thesis, entitled "Physical Science educators' and learners' perceptions on the content knowledge and conceptual understanding of graphs in algebra and kinematics", postulates on, and formulates, a framework for high school learners and educators of the significance of algebra in understanding and problem-solving of kinematics, in particular graphing.

Dr Phage joined the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education at the Central University of Technology, Free State as a lecturer of physical sciences education in 2009. He published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, a book chapter in accredited scientific journals, and conference proceedings.

International Translation Day celebrated in style



Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director: Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) (left), and Dr Sally Dzingwa, the Institutional Registrar (right), during the Multilingual Reading Corner launch.

Translation plays an important role in bringing nations together, contributing to developing and strengthening world peace and security. Every year on 30 September, International Translation Day is celebrated and therefore the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) Language Services Unit in partnership with Library and Information Services (LIS) commemorated the day under the theme "Translation, an art worth protecting." A Multilingual Reading Corner on the first floor of the Bethuel Setai Library was launched to promote multilingualism in all spheres of the institution.

Multilingual Reading Corner aims to create a welcoming, inclusive, comfortable and functional reading space dedicated to celebrate multilingualism; cater for diverse user needs and fosters love of reading within the library.

In her opening remarks, Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director: CILT, said "today, we recognise the crucial role of translation in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps by paying tribute to the work of language professionals as original creative workers in their own right – the unsung heroes of language who work tirelessly behind the scenes in the cultural sector, literary translation, and publishing to facilitate global understanding. We also celebrate the power of language and culture in enriching our lives and fostering international cooperation."

She also said she believes that the Multilingual Reading Corner will promote literacy and enable individuals to reach their full potential. "It is a well-known fact that reading improves cognitive skills, enlightens new ideas, and develops critical thinking skills. A multilingual reading space will therefore also play a crucial role in enhancing student access and success," she added.

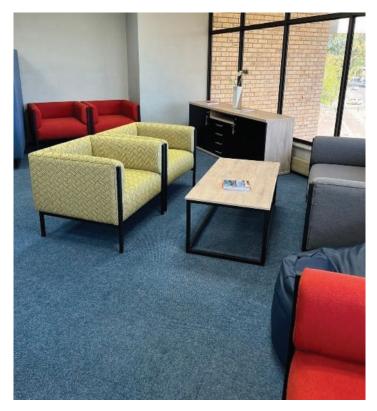
Ms Nikiwe Matebula, Manager: Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) Free State, explained that PanSALB's main role is to promote the use of indigenous languages and to create conditions for the development and use of all official South African languages. She also mentioned that the launch of such a reading space is encouraging and impressive, as it shows the university's intention to appreciate students who speak different languages.

"This year's International Translation Day theme highlights the importance of copyright in the digital age, and how such initiatives would encourage students to have a reading culture," said Ms Zukiswa Maya, Deputy University Librarian. She explained how happy she is with the collaboration between the Language Services Unit and the LIS in ensuring that such a concept is realised and implemented.

She further mentioned that students spend most of their time in the library and the reading corner will serve as a good place to refresh their minds.



The newly launched Multilingual Reading Corner



Dr Sally Dzingwa, the Institutional Registrar, officially launched the new Multilingual Reading Corner. "When we talk about transformation in action, this is exactly what we mean. Most of the time we talk about change, this is the tangible change we want to see. I want to applaud colleagues in the Language Services Unit and all stakeholders who worked with them to make this a reality for our students," she said. Dr Dzingwa mentioned that such a launch is an opportunity to showcase how the institution wants to create and embrace cultural diversity.

3rd Annual Dr Khotso Nkhatho's Prestige Public Research Lecture held



From left: Prof. J Warrican, Director: Caribbean Education Research Centre (University West Indies), Prof. Joyanne De Four-Babb, Research Director: University of Belize, Dr Khotso Nkhatho, Actor and playwright, Dr Laurette Bristol, Director: School of Education- University of West Indies, Cave Hill Barbados, Dr Munyaradzi Mushonga, Programme Director: African Studies in the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies (University of the Free State)

The Faculty of Humanities held its 3rd Annual Dr. Khotso Nkhatho Prestige Public Research Lecture themed "Decoloniality in the Higher Education Sector." Three distinguished academics, Dr. Munyaradzi Mushonga, Dr. Laurette Bristol, and Prof. Mlamuli Hlatshwayo, participated and led the discussions. These discussions were held against the backdrop of current debates on decolonisation in higher education, with an emphasis on the Global South.

By arguing for the relocation of universities in the Global South and addressing the colonialism that appears to be haunting Global South colleges in Africa and the Caribbean, the scholars were able to broaden the scope of their argument, conversing on the intersections of knowledge and how to best challenge and demolish the epistemic inequalities that are engendered by hegemonic educational praxis in the academic disciplines, pedagogy, and content knowledge of Global South universities.

The speakers emphasised the importance of positionality in discourses that call for an emancipatory approach as a counternarrative at the junction of positivistic methodological approaches, capitalism epistemology, and hegemony.

The lecture focused on the amplification of African epistemic lenses in the production of knowledge and the comprehension of the lived experiences of people in the Global South who have been marginalised and driven to the periphery of knowledge domains for centuries. The ensuing prestige lecture inspired hope and sparked fresh ideas.

CUT celebrates Leadership and Legacy of King Moshoeshoe



Pictured: CUT Delegation on day two of the conference: From left Prof. Makola, Prof. Modise, Mr Bungalipeli, Ms Pietersen, Dr Nxomani, Mr Jackson, Dr Fredericks, Ms Moss and Dr Dzansi.



Prof. Machobane presenting the keynote address



Lesotho Honourable Minister of Education and Training, Prof. Ntoi Rapapa

CUT in collaboration with the National University of Lesotho, Lerotholi Polytechnic, Lesotho College of Education, Motheo TVET College, and the University of the Free State held the annual King Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture in tribute to the leadership and legacy of King Moshoeshoe. This year's event aligned with the bicentennial celebration of the Basotho Nation, reinforcing a sense of unity and shared heritage among educational institutions and community leaders across Lesotho and South Africa.

Initiated in 2022, the annual lecture has grown into a regional event with a mission to honour King Moshoeshoe I's values and instill his principles of humility, unity, and strategic leadership. Held over two days, the lecture fostered dialogue on ethical leadership, gender equality, and cross-border academic collaboration, bringing together diverse participants from educational institutions and government representatives, including the Minister of Education from Lesotho.

The Honourable Minister of Education and Training, Prof. Ntoi Rapapa welcomed the guests and participants, setting the tone for the discussions on leadership and education. During a panel discussion, the student leaders explored ways to incorporate the leadership principles of King Moshoeshoe I, known as "Se Moshoeshoe," in their leadership practices. The panel also encouraged students to embrace these values in their roles as emerging leaders, which emphasised humility, unity, and strategic decision-making.

The Guest of honour, Prof. Machobane, delivered a compelling lecture that focused on King Moshoeshoe's visionary leadership and legacy of unity, with specific emphasis on gender succession and the saga of Princess Senate. Professor Machobane highlighted how King Moshoeshoe recognised the important role of women in leadership, advocating for their rightful place in positions of power. He argued that women should be supported in leadership at all costs and treated as equals to their male counterparts. His speech called for the empowerment of women in all spheres, stating that gender equity is a necessary step toward achieving progress in governance and education.

Dr. Clifford Nxomani, Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal highlighted the importance of cross-border partnerships, fostering collaboration and promoting Moshoeshoe's values.

The event concluded with discussions for future plans supported by a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among institutions with the goal to enhance mobility programs, research collaborations, curriculum innovation, virtual classrooms, and joint funding initiatives. These efforts aim to strengthen academic ties, promote ethical leadership, and honour Moshoeshoe's legacy across Southern Africa

CUT hosts LGBTQIA+ panel to raise awareness on issues faced by the queer community



Maluka Cleo, Wellness Centre, Karabo Sands, CUT FM Programming Manager, Tankiso Moea, Chairperson Gabien Student Organisation: CUT, Siyanda Magayana, Senior Officer, Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office Unit for Institutional Change and Social Justice: UFS, Buti Bungalipeli, Unit for Institutional Renewal and Transformation: CUT.

The Institutional Renewal and Transformation Unit (IR&T), in partnership with Wellness Center, held an LGBTQIA+ panel discussion themed: 'Reflecting, Empowering, and Uniting Our Communities'.

The panel highlighted the importance of social cohesion and coexistence between LGBTQIA+ people and the broader community. It also provided a platform to discuss the issues and traumas that the global pride community faces, as well as the challenges encountered both internally and beyond the university's borders.

Experienced activist and CUT alumni Akhona Komeni from the Free State Rainbow Seeds emphasised the value of these kinds of engagements in creating awareness among people who aren't familiar with the pride community challenges. He said that people frequently cite religion and culture as justifications for their discomfort over their sexual orientation. "To prevent offending others, we should inquire for the correct acronym rather than identifying someone based solely on their orientation. We need to create safe spaces for those who are different from us."

Siyanda Magayana, Senior Officer for Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Unit for Institutional Change and Social Justice: University of Free State, deliberated on the significance of gender equality and the discrimination faced within communities.

"People often misunderstand that issues within the lesbian and gay population extend beyond sexuality as there are also issues related to gender identity. Everyone should feel comfortable with themselves and seek education," said Magayana.

Concerns were voiced by students from both campuses about institutional forms that only offer binary gender options. They complained that there was no "other" option, which led to confusion regarding their acceptance.

The university management was requested to investigate the possibility of establishing a Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office on campus.

CUT's high-achieving under- and postgraduates join the esteemed Golden Key International Honour Society at prestigious ceremony



CUT Golden Key Executive members.

CUT proudly hosted a prestigious induction ceremony in collaboration with Golden Key Southern Africa, where a select few were welcomed into the esteemed Golden Key International Honour Society. As the world's largest international collegiate society for high-achieving undergraduate and post graduate students, Golden Key is recognised for its focus on academic excellence, leadership, and service. With solid relationships across 400 universities globally, the society offers a range of opportunities, including scholarships, travel, and study abroad programs, to its members who qualify by ranking in the top 15% of their class.

The ceremony marked a significant moment for the newly inducted members, who have demonstrated excellence in their academic pursuits. Ms Gillian Cloete, Regional Director of Golden Key Southern Africa, expressed her pride in welcoming the new members and spoke of the immense opportunities that awaits them. She emphasised that this moment is an achievement and the beginning of a journey toward greatness.

"Being part of this society opens doors to connecting with like-minded individuals with the same passion for success. I encourage you to equip yourselves with the tools you need to excel, seek mentors, take on leadership roles, and embrace challenges," said Cloete.



Ms Gillian Cloete, Regional Director of Golden Key Southern Africa pictured with honorary member Esmeralda Nyedimane, Pastor of Christian Revival Church.

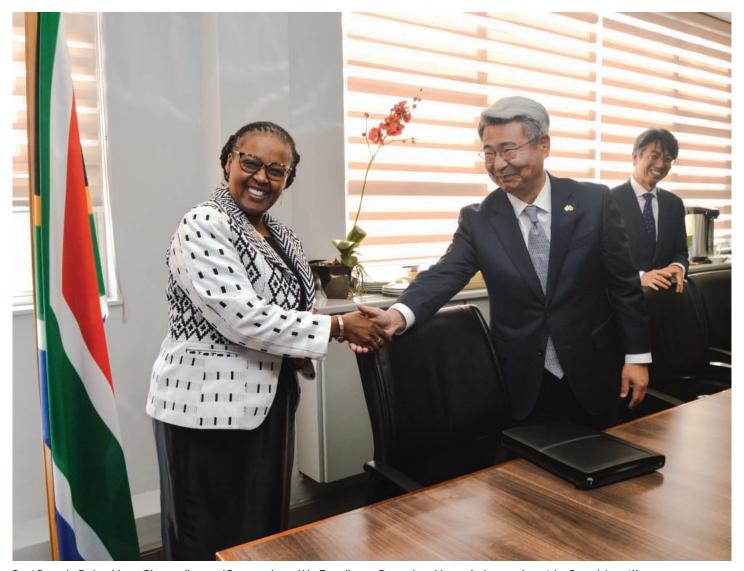
She advised students to approach the future with courage and enthusiasm, reminding them that the only limits they face are those they place on themselves. "I do not doubt that each of you has the potential to achieve great things and leave a lasting impact on the world"



Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal congratulating Mr Matome Kganakga, Deputy Director: Marketing and Brand Management the new Golden Key member.

Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, delivered an inspiring address to the inductees, welcoming them into the prestigious global society. She mentioned that the Chapter welcomed 349 members in its inaugural year and is now standing at 473 with 124 new members. "In 2023, our university proudly launched its own Golden Key chapter, marking a new era in the recognition of academic achievement. We are proud of what you have achieved, but also be mindful of the responsibility that comes with it. Let your achievements inspire you to continue striving for excellence, and let your actions inspire others to do the same", she said.

Partners, CUT and Samsung graduates 46 students in essential 4IR skills



Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, and His Excellency Dong-han Yang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

CUT and Samsung proudly celebrated the graduation of 46 students from two cohorts in the Samsung Innovation Campus (SIC) programme. These students, through their hard work and dedication, have not only completed the program but have also set a benchmark for future participants.

The first cohort included 20 students who completed Coding and Programming in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the second cohort included 26 students who completed Coding and Programming in Python. This marks the continuation of the impactful partnership between Samsung and CUT, which began with signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in November 2022.

The SIC programme, a part of Samsung's global corporate social investment initiatives, is designed to equip students with essential skills from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It primarily targets university students, recent graduates, and young professionals looking to enhance their technical skills and knowledge. The 46 graduates completed a rigorous curriculum combining theoretical learning and practical application, focusing on the cutting-edge area of Coding and Programming.

Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, stated that the inception of the CUT-Samsung programme in 2023 marked a significant milestone in the university's journey toward fostering innovative teaching and learning. This partnership has directly enhanced the readiness of graduates to engage with industries both locally and internationally.

"The collaborative efforts between Samsung and CUT have placed us on an upward trajectory, particularly in promoting and supporting STEM education. Our students have acquired invaluable knowledge and skills in Python programming, machine learning, and Al development, all of which are critical in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Furthermore, our staff has benefitted from exposure to international working relationships, cutting-edge technologies, and the development of a wide range of hard and soft skills."

Mr Simon Lee, CEO and President of Samsung Africa, stated that the ultimate objective of the SIC partnership is to contribute to the national imperative of creating work-ready and employable group of students.

"It is truly a special moment to witness the successful execution of the partnership with CUT. This programme will help young students and adults to develop skills required for IT functions such as programming, Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data through theoretical and hands-on training."

He added that the programme has experienced significant growth at CUT, with female participation increasing to 50%. "This growth demonstrates the programme's success and the increasing interest in 4IR skills." Mr Lee congratulated the 46 graduates, acknowledging that some have secured employment, continued their studies, or pursued entrepreneurship. "The collective vision of our partnership is not only to enable and empower CUT students with 4IR expertise but also to turn all graduates into future technological leaders."

His Excellency Dong-han Yang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, also attended the ceremony and emphasised the importance of education in bridging gaps and driving national development. He encouraged graduates to continue applying their skills to advance South Africa's position in the global 4IR landscape. "What you have learned through these courses will be a valuable lesson. I highly encourage you to further develop and apply the skills and experience you have gained through this course and make a significant contribution to positioning South Africa at the forefront of Industry 4.0 and the Al industry."



Celebrating the special moment with the graduates from the left front row: Ms Lenhle Khoza, Head: B-BBB and Transformation, Samsung, Prof. Muthoni Masinde, Dean: Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, Mr Simon Lee, CEO and President of Samsung Africa, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, His Excellency Dong-han Yang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Prof. Alfred Ngowi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research Innovation and Engagement, Ms Kwena Mageza, Senior Director: Legal Services and Mr Bob Tladi, Chief Director: Department of Education.

Second row from left: Toni Maake, Brand and Corporate Marketing: Samsung, Keneiloe Serongoane, Senior PR and Communications Account Manager: Samsung, Mr Leolyn Jackson, Director: Centre for Global Engagement, Prof. Yali Woyessa, Assistant Dean: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Mr Moses Kau, Intergovernmental Relations and Special Programmes: Office of the Premier, Dr Adeyinka Akanbi, Head: Department and Senior Lecturer Department of Information Technology and Thabang Mokoka, Corporate Communications Director: Office of the Premier.

CUT's International Partner Week aims to enrich research teaching and learning



CUT's Centre for Global Engagement (CGE) through its Internationalisation and Partnerships (IAP) initiative held an annual International Partner Week that focused on advancing Internationalisation through academic partnerships.

The event served as a platform to foster collaborative initiatives aimed at enriching research, teaching, learning, and cultivating an Internationalisation-at-home culture at CUT.

With a history of internationalisation spanning two decades, coinciding with the university's 20th anniversary, Partner Week embodies both the institution's vision and a retrospective analysis of past endeavours, while also charting a course for future initiatives.

This year's theme, "An Internationalised 21st Century Scholar: International Partnerships as the Enabling Mechanism," aims to explore innovative partnership opportunities through research, academic initiatives, and student-driven programs leveraging international networks by means of contemporary education approach.

The week-long engagements featured amongst others, presentations, parallel discussion session and interactive dialogue between international stakeholders and academic partners, government and the industry.

In her address, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, said the International Partner Week is a pivotal moment for CUT to build on the legacy of innovation and excellence in applied sciences. "Internationalisation has been a cornerstone of our development over the past two decades, alianing with our vision to be a globally engaged institution. Through this initiative, we foster collaborations that propel us into new frontiers of research, teaching, and STEM education — a critical focus for our university in support of the STEM field as the national priority. Our partnership with national, provincial and local government as well as business spheres, demonstrates that charity begins at home to forge regional collaborations. With this international partnership initiative, we are committed to creating cross-border partnerships that will benefit our university and contribute to its status as an active participant on a global scale. Your involvement and support have been instrumental in our journey, and we look forward to further strengthening this relationship," she said.

CUT partners take a lead in discussions envisioned to enhance educational experiences



Participants from various local, international and SADC partners taking the lead in discussions envisioned to enhance educational experiences through collaboration with global institutions and industry leaders. From Left: Prof. Agnaldo Arroio from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, Mr Kagisho Moloto and Ms Anita Mnisi from the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr Kabonyane Hiri-Khudu, acting Director, Office of International Education and Partnerships from the University of Botswana and Mr Siyanda Qumana, Head of Training and Development from Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd.

One of the highlights was the participation of SADC and international universities, including the University of Botswana and the University of São Paulo in Brazil. These partnerships allow students to gain valuable international experience through study-abroad programmes and research collaborations.

Collaboration with industry partners, such as Eskom, Botshabelo Digital Hub, and Transnet has also been instrumental in providing students with practical experience and career opportunities. Students have been offered internships and bursaries to help bridge the gap between academia and the workplace.

Ms Sedireng Mokae, Training and Development Facilitator: Botshabelo Digital Hub, emphasised the importance of training and development of young people. She said that it is crucial for fostering individual potential and ensuring societal progress. "Our partnership with CUT is bearing great fruits. Last year we recruited about 20 CUT diploma graduates of whom four of them are permanently employed. We are grateful to be part of this collaboration and look forward to recruiting more students for a greater course."

Dr Kaboyaone Hiri-khudu, acting Director: Office of International Education and Partnerships at the University of Botswana, reflected on the fruitful partnership with CUT over the past five years, stating that the partnership is very important, especially because it is a SADC partnership. "One of the areas we are focusing on is the student mobility specialising in study abroad programmes. I am also impressed to witness the increased student participation, which is a positive indicator of engagement and interest in international opportunities.

Dr Hiri-khudu added that the Botswana University has never had a partner week, and she intends to host it in 2025. "We have never had partner week, and I am going to start small before I expand abroad. Having SADC universities will be a great start and CUT will definitely be number one on my list."

Mr Siyanda Qumana, Head of Training and Development at Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd, shared his organisation's commitment to supporting CUT graduates through internships and bursaries. He stated that one of the key outputs of their involvement is to ensure that CUT graduates get the necessary on-the-job experience. "We have already provided bursaries to seven CUT electrical engineering students, and we are also actively recruiting for internships for final-year students."

Prof. Dr Agnaldo Arroio from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, expressed enthusiasm about resuming discussions for cooperation with CUT after interruptions due to the pandemic. "This agreement means that students, staff, teachers, researchers, and administrative personnel will be able to engage in international mobility."



He also added that students from CUT could benefit from free tuition at his institution, making it an attractive option for those seeking international experience. Prof. Dr Hoyo also noted how South African students showed curiosity about Brazil and international mobility opportunities, which he found encouraging.

Students visited different exhibiting stalls to acquire information related to bursaries offered and internship opportunities available.

CUT hosts the official launch of the National Science Week



Minister of Science and Innovation, Prof. Blade Nzimande addressing participants at the Launch of the Science Week held at the Central University of Technology, Free State.

The Minister of Science and Innovation, Prof. Blade Nzimande, launched the National Science Week (NSW) 2024 held at the Central University of Technology on 28 September 2024 under the theme, "Living in a high-tech world: should we be concerned?".

NSW is an annual celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Innovation (STEMI) that brings together thousands of learners and members of the public for workshops, science exhibitions, and lectures. This event aims to close the gap between society and science, as science affects every aspect of people's lives. The goal is to build a South African society that has the necessary knowledge about science, is aware of scientific and technological developments, and can form its own opinions about science matters.

Prof. Blade Nzimande, accentuated the crucial link between science and tourism, particularly through the newly launched Astro-Tourism Strategy. "This initiative is designed to showcase South Africa's unique astronomical assets, including the globally acclaimed Square Kilometre Array in Carnarvon."

He noted that Astro-Tourism allows for interactions with observatories, planetariums, and stargazing opportunities, enriching the tourism experience beyond traditional attractions. "Through this Astro-Tourism strategy, we seek to demonstrate and derive benefit from the connection between science and tourism. The theme for this year seeks to foster critical discussions on the social impact of science and technology, particularly considering current global issues, such as the ethical use of drones."

Highlighting the historical context, the Minister addressed the legacy of apartheid, which aimed to limit educational opportunities for black South Africans. He emphasised the progress made over the past 30 years in increasing the representation of black and women scientists while acknowledging that challenges still remain.

A notable highlight of the event was the recognition of Munei Netsharotha, a Grade 12 learner from Limpopo, who created a hydrogen-fuelled vehicle. His innovation aligns with national priorities in advancing the hydrogen economy and showcasing the potential of young scientists.

The Minister passionately urged students to seize the educational opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). "You are the beneficiaries of a democratic order, for which your grandparents fought for. You now have access to opportunities that were denied to them. I therefore urge you not to take these opportunities for granted, use them wisely and make your families proud. It is crucial that we nurture you as a new generation of scientists to address pressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change."

In his remarks, Prof. Alfred Ngowi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, acknowledged intergovernmental collaboration's importance. "Celebrating the National Science Week's growth is a vital intervention for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The increasing number of students engaged in STEM careers and outreach programmes have expanded access to education. I encourage continued collaboration among academics, industry leaders, and policymakers to ensure that technology is accessible to all, to bridge the gap between science and society."



Learners from different schools, both primary and secondary, showed up in numbers to participate in the exhibition and learn more about Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Innovation (STEMI).



Young innovators showcase their talent at CUT during the National Science Week. Minister Nzimande taking a close look at Munei Netsharotha's creation, a Grade 12 learner from Limpopo.



At the artisan Village stall, staffed by Motheo TVET students, learners experienced real science, engineering machinery and inventions created by students.

Annual agricultural extension conference focuses on bridging collaborative initiatives to strengthen the research, training, extension, and farmer nexus



The 57th annual South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE) conference, a significant event in the agricultural community, was graced by the presence of Prof. David Ngidi, acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the time; Dr. Zenzile Khetsha and Mr Thulani Masondo, SASAE President.

The 57th annual conference commenced on 26 August and concluded on 29 August 2024. It is a collaborative effort between the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), and the South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE).

The conference focused on strengthening the research, training, extension, and farmer nexus through a series of collective initiatives in which the participation of government, universities, and the private sector is crucial.

The four-day conference, attended by 396 delegates from all nine provinces, explored collective collaborations, innovative solutions, and best practices to aid farmers' challenges. Furthermore, researchers showcased six top academic papers, shared 36 research topics, and presented six inspiring success stories in agriculture. These success stories, along with over 100 posters, served as a beacon of hope for the sector's future, inspiring us all to continue our efforts in the agricultural sector.

CUT acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the time, Prof. David Ngidi, highlighted the importance of strengthening research collaborations. "Research should not be confined to the walls of academic institutions. Instead, it should spill over into practical applications that benefit farmers and enhance livelihood opportunities. By collaborating on research initiatives, we can ensure that our findings are relevant and readily applicable as we are an academic institution that offers agricultural qualifications. This increases the efficiency of our work and supports farmers in adopting innovations that will improve their productivity and sustainability," said Prof. Najdi.

Prof. Pieter Fourie, CUT Head of Agriculture, presented on "Bridging Collaborative Initiatives for Strengthening the Research-Training-Extension-Farmer Nexus in South Africa." He said that South Africa's agricultural sector is a cornerstone of the country's economy, providing food security, directly employing 800-900 000 people, and significantly contributing to the entire agricultural value chain, including agro-processing, logistics, and retail. "As a country, we have made significant strides in each of these areas. We have world-class research institutions, dedicated training programs, and a growing focus on extension services. Yet, despite these strengths, there are gaps that need to be addressed," he said.



Prof. Pieter Fourie, CUT Head of Agriculture, presented on "Bridging Collaborative Initiatives for Strengthening the Research-Training-Extension-Farmer Nexus in South Africa."

However, he said the sector faces numerous challenges, including climate change, fluctuating market demands, and socio-economic disparities. "Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and growth. At the heart of agricultural advancement is the seamless integration of research, training, extension services, and farmer participation—a nexus that, when effectively bridged, can catalyse transformative change in our agricultural sector."

The research-training-extension-farmer nexus, a crucial component in the agricultural value chain, represents the interconnectedness of key elements. Despite its importance, the nexus is often fragmented. To enhance Agricultural Extension in South Africa, universities and industry can play pivotal roles by bridging the gap between research, training, and practical application.

SASAE President, Mr Thulani Masondo, emphasised that the conference offered delegates a crucial platform to shape the future of agricultural extension in South Africa. "We must acknowledge both the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. Our farmers are at the forefront of tackling pressing issues such as climate change, food security, and economic disparities. As extension practitioners, it is our responsibility to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to thrive in this ever-evolving sector. This conference is not just a gathering, but a powerful platform that empowers us to take responsibility for the future of our agricultural sector," stated Masondo, instilling a sense of empowerment and commitment in the audience.

Delegates were urged to take the insights from the conference and translate them into action. "Let us engage with our communities, advocate for policy changes that support extension services, and remain resolute in our commitment to sustainable agricultural practices. It is through our collective action and commitment that we can bring about real change in the agricultural sector," concluded Masondo, motivating the audience to remain committed to sustainable practices.

CUT Hotel School hosts info Chef Conference in partnership with the SA Chef Free State



Chef Patso's team won the Board Members' cook-off challenge.

The SA Chefs Free State Regional Committee, in partnership with the Central University of Technology Hotel School, hosted an Info Chef Exhibition Open Day and Conference following their successful event in 2023.

The conference aims to create awareness of the unique hospitality industry, showcase key stakeholders, ignite a passion for the industry to the next generation, promote and grow the specialised trade of cheffing, and provide a networking platform for various tourism and hospitality enthusiasts to interact with industry titans through live demonstrations, discussions, and sharing of the latest trends.

The day was filled with excitement and various exhibitions from industry suppliers and partners, food demonstrations, cook-offs, and lucky draws. According to the SA Chefs chairman of the Free State Regional Committee, Deon Pastor, the success of the previous conference presented an opportunity to improve the event this year. "This event is about having fun and enjoying what we do best, by introducing young talent to the space, sharing ideas, and celebrating the art of cooking. We are here to inspire, educate, and connect."

Free State chefs participated in a head-to-head, 60-minute cooking demo competition sponsored by Econo Foods, where they had to prepare two dishes. CUT Head Chef Pitikoe competed and won the challenge against Clazzique Academy Head Chef Confidence. Chef Pitikoe received an award from Unilever Food and said, "I am excited about the results. This was unexpected. At first, I was extremely nervous because it was such short notice, but my mentor advised me to keep it simple and relaxed. Winning this competition is special to me, and I am grateful to my team who rallied behind me throughout this competition."

Chef Catherine, Head Pastry Chef, taught the audience how to prepare a chocolate affair. She expressed her undoubted love for baking, a skill she acquired for many years. "I love anything sweet and chocolate. The reason I choose to go back in the kitchen is because my creativity and passion is fulfilled in the kitchen," she said.

Chef Matthew Foxon, Executive Chef of Saxon who was also the guest speaker gave the young talent on how to become the best chef in the world. He prepared a fish dish for the audience. "The most important thing about this career is discipline in all you do."

Gustav Pieterse, General Manager of Saxon Hotel, Villas, and Spa advised future hoteliers to be passionate, enthusiastic, and disciplined in order to succeed in the hospitality industry.

The day ended with Board Members' cook-off competition, where three teams comprising of professional chefs had to swap their kitchens and continue with the dish that had already been prepared by the other chefs. Their dishes were presented and judged by international chefs and Chef Patso's team won the challenge.

NEMISA Microsoft Digital Literacy Training



In a step towards bridging the digital divide and advancing technical competencies, the Central University of Technology (CUT), in partnership with the National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA), successfully delivered the Microsoft Digital Literacy course to 140 community members. Additionally, CUT held specialised Robotic Operating System (ROS) training for students in Electronics and IT. These programmes reflect CUT's commitment to equipping individuals with crucial digital skills and fostering collaborative learning.

The Microsoft Digital Literacy course catered for the youth and adults from diverse backgrounds. It covered essential topics including working with computers, accessing online information, communicating and collaborating digitally, and ensuring safe and responsible online participation. By addressing these areas, CUT aimed to empower participants with the foundational skills required to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

The community engagement initiative was driven by a commitment to social impact and inclusivity, primarily targeting community members who may have limited access to digital resources. Upon completion, participants received certificates, marking a significant milestone in their digital literacy journey. The course not only enhanced their ability to navigate digital spaces but also improved their employability and readiness to engage in the digital economy.

Kgolo Community Development Trust settles graduates' debts



Onthatile Gondwe, a beneficiary who studied Mechanical Engineering; Lumka Tshiki, Kgolo Community Development Trust; Dr Oupa Nkagisang, Kgolo Community Development Trust; Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal; Mr Milingoni Nemutshili, Chief Financial Officer and Dimpho Sechogela, a beneficiary who studied Office Management.

On 22 October 2024, the Central University of Technology (CUT) in collaboration with the Kgolo Community Development Trust held a significant handover ceremony of about R 2.1 million towards paying students historical debt.

Two graduates who benefitted from the Trust's support, Ms Dimpho Sechogela (Office Management & Technology) and Mr Onthatile Gondwe (Mechanical Engineering), shared their heartfelt stories at the ceremony. Both spoke of their immense relief and gratitude for completing their studies on time without the financial burdens that often hinder students. They also stressed the importance of giving back to their communities, pledging to contribute positively as they embark on their new internships.

Dr. Oupa Nkagisang, a founding trustee and leader of the Kgolo Community Development Trust, outlined the broader scope of their work. "While the Trust focuses on student funding, it also actively invests in community development. The Trust owns a 5% stake in its funding, which is directed toward initiatives in infrastructure, health, and education." He detailed several community projects, such as purchasing a mobile clinic, providing medical equipment, and supporting culinary school programmes.

Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, expressed her deep appreciation for Kgolo Community Development Trust's financial contribution to the university graduates. She highlighted that the Trust's financial contributions have increased since the partnership began, providing much-needed support to students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those from the John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality.

She also emphasised the challenges in higher education funding, including the alarming increase in its cost. She mentioned that the difficulties students face concern every parent, guardian, or citizen who cares about the country's future, especially considering that many students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Prof. Dube recently donated R188,800 to the Student Representative Council in recognition of their crucial role in addressing the students' challenges. Her contribution will be establishing a food bank that will provide meal tickets and vouchers to students in need, significantly impacting their welfare.

ENACTUS CUT crowned winners at the 2024 Schneider SA Electric Energy Transition Battery Innovation Challenge



The Kratos Batteries project winners took home the top prize for their innovative approach to sustainable energy storage. They walked away with 2 000 Euros. They are from left: Kananelo Khutlane, Andrew Okene, Mabota Makhakhe, and Lebohang Nthama.

The Enactus CUT team has once again proven its excellence in innovation and entrepreneurship, securing first and third place in the hybrid 2024 Schneider Electric Energy Transition Battery Innovation Challenge, where six highly competitive Enactus teams participated in the competition, showcasing their innovative skills in battery technology to a panel of technical expert adjudicators from industry. The competition demonstrated the team's technical ingenuity and alignment with global sustainability goals, underscoring the critical role of young innovators in shaping the future of energy.

During the practical segment of the competition, the Enactus CUT team was tasked with implementing a comprehensive plan to develop an innovative battery technology solution. Their mission was to reach a minimum of 200 youth aged 14 to 35 years, from high schools, colleges, universities, and communities. The team not only innovatively delivered fundamental training on electricity efficiency, battery technology, and energy transition but also engaged the youth in a design thinking project-based activity. This activity focused on the development of low-carbon batteries, contributing to the global effort to combat climate change.

Over a period of three months, the team meticulously tracked their progress and the engagement of the participants, ensuring that the impact of their project was both measurable and meaningful.

In the first phase of the challenge, three CUT enterprises were among the top 12 selected teams to receive a R12 000 grant, which was subsequently allocated to support their project-specific needs. Furthermore, two Enactus CUT enterprises- Kratos Batteries and Airnergy and Tech Solutions earned a spot in the final round of the competition, where they were invited to present their solutions to a panel of judges.

The Kratos Batteries project took home the top prize for their innovative approach to sustainable energy storage. The team developed a battery that uses recyclable materials, such as polyethylene and polycarbonate, for its separator and casing and was awarded 2 000 Euros and a trophy. A standout feature of their design is an Al-powered battery management system, which employs machine learning models to optimise charging cycles, extend battery lifespan, and monitor the state of charge and health in real time.



Enactus CUT winners from both Kratos Batteries and Airnergy and Tech Solutions.

Airnergy and Tech Solutions secured third place on their hybrid energy system, which combines hydrogen and solar power to charge lithium phosphate ion batteries. The system features an electrolyser, storage tanks, a fuel cell, solar panels, and a web platform for real-time monitoring of solar panel positioning, voltage, current, and temperature. The project highlighted the potential of hybrid energy solutions in advancing sustainable energy technologies. The team was awarded 1 000 Euros and a trophy.

Faculty advisor Prof. Crispen Chipunza and Co-faculty Advisors Prof. Patient Rambe and Ms Maraka Lefera expressed their contentment for the student's success in the competition citing passion, dedication, and entrepreneurial spirit. "This serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that our dedicated youth can have on creating a brighter and more sustainable future, making a meaningful impact in addressing energy challenges in our communities," said Prof. Chipunza.

CUT Welkom Choir impress adjudicators at the Tiro Mpane Foundation National Choral Eisteddfod



The CUT Welkom Campus Choir participated at the annual Tiro Mpane Foundation National Choral Eisteddfod Free State Regional Eliminations under the leadership of the conductor, Mr Thabang Mangoejane and the Chorus Master, Mr Goitsemang Mahoko. The event held at the Performing Arts Centre, Bloemfontein, on 07 September 2024, saw the captivating performance of the African composition, "Famban' Kahle", and the Western piece, "Lustige Ziguener Weissen" by the choir. The choristers saw victory on both pieces: 1st place: African piece, 3rd place: Western piece and 3rd overall in the Standard Category.

Tiro Mpane Foundation National Choral Eisteddford is a prestigious cultural event dedicated to celebrating the diversity of choral music excellence and fostering artistic talent within communities. Founded by the Tiro Mpane Foundation, this annual festival stands as a testament to the transformative power of music in enriching lives and connecting hearts.

Meanwhile, the Bloemfontein Choir's exceptional talent was recently recognised when they were awarded the top prize in a prestigious choral music competition.

The Choir embarked on a remarkable journey at the annual Buang Moloto Foundation Choral Festival in Rustenburg on 26 October 2024. In a historic first, the choir participated in three competitions, securing first place in the African category and third place in the Western category. Their overall excellence was recognised with the Best Presentable Choir Award. Their outstanding performance in the African and Western categories earned them R30,000, with an additional R10,000 for their overall award. Their journey, competing against eighteen other choirs demonstrates their quality and sheer talent.

Mr. Emihle Mbatyazwa, the choir secretary and third-year education student, expressed pride in their accomplishments, highlighting dedication, hard work and teamwork that led to their success.

In addition to showcasing their talent, the choir's achievement highlights CUT's dedication to promoting excellence in the arts and culture. Dr. Bernard Sebake, Dean of Student Affairs, had this to say, "our choir is a shining example of the university's support and commitment to excellence." He highlighted the importance of such initiatives receiving adequate support and what such achievements mean for the institution. "This is a moment of pride for the entire university community, and we stand eager to continue supporting their future endeavours," he said.



 $CUT\,Welkom\,Campus\,Choir\,led\,to\,victory\,by\,conductor,\,Mr\,Thabang\,Mangoejane.$



Members of the CUT Bloemfontein Choir during an activation on campus. Back row (from left to right): Mr I. Letlake, Mr G. Matselane, Mr X Ramatlebane. Middle-row: Mr W Mkosana; Ms M Sehaole; Ms S Mpolweni; Ms X Malgas; Ms L Mohlathe; Mr E Mbatyazwa (Secretary). Front row: Ms S. Kantane, Mr R. Motswapong, and Mr L Mokhethi (Deputy Chairperson).

CUT launches Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme, a bold move in furthering gender equality



From left: Ms Varonique Philander, Founder of Legal Ascend and Chaya Legal, Ms Elona Ndlovu, Vice President: Small Businesses, Chartered Coach, Executive and Entrepreneurial Coach, Ms Zana Boshoff, Project Manager: Entrepreneurship, Ms Sive Mbangiswano, Lecturer: Business Support Studies, Ms Karen Snyman, EDHE (Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education) Chairperson for the Student Entrepreneurship Coordinators Community of Practice (SEC CoP), Dr Norah Clarke, founding Director of the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme, Prof. Alfred Ngowi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research Innovation and Engagement, Mr Kareli Kutwane, Business Development Officer and Ms Ellen Fischat, Founder of Story Room and Co-Founder of Inspiring African Women.

CUT proudly launched the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP), an initiative aimed at further empowering women students with the skills and tools necessary to thrive in entrepreneurship.

SWEEP seeks to equip CUT women with resources to become entrepreneurs and leaders, driving economic change within their communities and increase their representation in business and entrepreneurship.

In her opening remarks, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, acknowledged the launch of SWEEP as a significant step towards gender equality and empowerment at the university. She emphasised the need for women students to find their voices and make substantial contributions in male-dominated spaces. She stated that the programme will provide the necessary tools, resources, and support to help them overcome challenges and succeed.

"This initiative holds a special place in my heart, and I am excited to witness the beginning of what I believe will be a transformative journey for our women students. We aim to see an increase in female-led startups on both our campuses over the next couple of years", she said.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr Norah Clarke, a renowned advocate for women economic empowerment, emphasised the importance of women to gain control over their economic futures. "It's not about waiting for someone else to provide the opportunity or expecting society to change overnight, but about taking the reins and creating those opportunities for oneself."

Dr Clarke encouraged women to challenge the visible and invisible barriers they encounter. She praised SWEEP for its focus on enabling women to generate their income and retain their dignity, describing the programme's vision as "an Africa where women have financial independence and no longer need to rely on others."

CUT 4th-year Radiography student receives the 2024 Abe Bailey Travel Bursary





Abigail will participate in the three-week programme, which includes a tour of the United Kingdom, engagement with influential leaders, and other activities designed to broaden their understanding of global issues and leadership.

Asked about her expectations on this scholarship, Abigail said "I feel honoured to be part of this programme and I expect to learn as much as I can and use the experience gained to broaden my horizons. I am also excited to meet new like minds and make long-lasting global connections. I would like to acknowledge everyone who supported and guided me throughout this entire application process, and I wish to see more of our deserving students participating in these kinds of highly competitive global opportunities," she said.



This marks a significant achievement for CUT since the last recipient in 2018. The objective of the Abe Bailey Travel Scholarship is to broaden the views of young South Africans, expose them to the globalised world and equip them with exceptional leadership qualities. Annually, these awards are given to academically deserving students who show qualities of leadership and service to others, and have a good track record, not only in their academics but also in a wider social context. It also encourages recipients to engage with diverse cultures and ideas, enhancing their global perspectives and leadership capabilities.

"This achievement is a testament to her dedication, academic excellence, and leadership potential. We are incredibly proud to have her represent CUT and South Africa on this prestigious international platform. This award not only highlights Abe's remarkable accomplishments but also serves as an inspiration to all students at CUT to strive for excellence and pursue opportunities for growth, leadership, and service. We encourage all our students to actively participate in these kinds of scholarships as we believe in fostering our students to become global leaders who will make a positive impact in the world. We are also very happy because this is the first since 2018 that our student was awarded this grant," said Ms Martina Moss, Deputy Director: Academic Student and Staff Mobility.

CUT Bradley Gawie grabs Siyaphumelela Scholarship with both hands



Bradley Gawie, CUT postgraduate student and Siyaphumelela DREAM scholarship recipient.

Bradley Gawie, CUT postgraduate student in Agricultural Management has been selected as one of only eight students globally to receive the Siyaphumelela DREAM scholarship. This scholarship is a significant achievement as it places Bradley among a select group chosen from over 300 institutions worldwide, including South Africa, United States, Australia, and other countries.

The Siyaphumelela Initiative, supported by the Kresge Foundation, aims to advance equity and improve student success in higher education. The scholarship offers a unique opportunity for Bradley to attend a week-long conference in Philadelphia, from 18-21 February 2025, where he will engage with international peers and experts in student success strategies.

Bradley's journey began with his active involvement in student development where he served as a peer mentor, academic advisor, Supplemental Instruction (SI) leader, and Writing Centre advisor. He participated in the 2024 Siyaphumelela Conference, where he co-authored and co-presented a paper titled "The Role of the Student Voice in Shaping Student Success: A Student Leader's Perspective." His dedication to student support has significantly increased the participation in his SI sessions, with attendance rising from seven students in 2023 to 46 in 2024.

Reflecting on the significance of the scholarship, Bradley emphasised that it represents not just his personal achievement but also an opportunity to further impact student success at CUT. He hopes to strengthen the SI program by amplifying student voices and addressing the challenges faced by students in their academic paths. "For me, Siyaphumelela highlights and reinforces the importance of supporting students and helping them navigate the complexities of university life. When I came here, I met the most amazing people who, from my first year until now, still rally behind me and continue to support me in my academic and professional endeavours," he said.

His commitment to student development stems from his own experience as a first-generation student who overcame significant obstacles, including dropping out of university earlier in his academic career due to a lack of support structures. Now, as a representative of CUT on the global stage, he aims to bring attention to the institution's excellence and foster a culture of student-centered support.

His journey reflects the university's commitment to excellence and student success, showcasing the profound impact that support programmes can have on students' academic and professional lives.

Central University of Technology, Free State welcomes new Chairperson of Council



The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Cllr Rajesh Mahabeer as the new Chairperson of the CUT Council, with effect from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2027. Cllr Mahabeer brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to higher education, governance, and the mission of CUT.

Cllr Mahabeer is a Professor of Practice at the Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg (UJ). He is an accomplished leader with an extensive background in the finance sector. He is a business turnaround specialist and is currently working on his PhD in Corporate Decline Avoidance and Turnaround Strategy at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). He serves on various boards, where he lends corporate expertise in governance, finance, auditing, accounting, and strategic leadership.

Before this appointment, Cllr Mahabeer served as Chairperson of the Audit, Risk and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance Committee (ARIC) of the CUT Council, and as a member of the Remuneration Committee (RemCo).

He is a Senior Chartered Accountant, with experience spanning 46 years of diverse financial and leadership roles in the public and private sectors. For 25 years, he was a C-suite executive in large corporations such as AECI, Tetra Pak International, OTH Beier & Company, and Hart Limited. He further held Chief Financial Officer (CFO) positions at Walter Sisulu University (WSU), the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), and South African National Parks, and was nominated for the Best CFO in the Public Sector Award by CFO South Africa in 2017.

His qualifications include a CA(SA), FCMA, CGMA, FCA (England and Wales), BFP, FCCA, CIA, FIIASA, MInstD, SARIPA, INSOL, MBA (Derby), MCom (University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), PGDip Acc. (UKZN), and NDip Cost Acc. (Durban University of Technology (DUT)).

Cllr Mahabeer is an expert in turning financially distressed companies around, with sustainable results, and is a restructuring expert. He is a scholar of systems thinking, and applies this methodology to solve complex problems. He is also a registered Senior Business Rescue Practitioner.

He currently serves on the Education Committee of the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA), as well as the Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)'s Global Committee for Accountants in Business of the Association.

He also serves as a non-executive director on several boards; chairs audit and risk committees; and is a member of the boards of directors of the Office of Health Standards Compliance, Onderstepoort Biological Products, and now CUT, amongst others.

Cllr Mahabeer was recently appointed as the Independent Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MMDA). He further serves as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee of the South African Health Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA). He previously served on the Committee for Auditor Ethics, and the Accreditation Committee of the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA).

He is the founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Trilord Consulting (Pty) Ltd (Trilord), a multidisciplinary consulting firm with advanced skills and strategic leadership experience at the C-suite. Attributable to his professional background, he brings a wealth of experience in corporate governance, King IV, strategy, auditing, accounting, finance, ICT, International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP), taxation, legal matters, ethics, and human resources, amongst others, to the boards he serves.

He succeeds Dr Charity Mbileni-Morema, who served with dedication and led the CUT Council through significant developments until the end of her term on 31 October 2024.

Cllr Mahabeer said that he is honoured to serve as Chairperson of the CUT Council. He is confident that the university has a bright future, and that it will play an increasingly important role to all its stakeholders, including its students and graduates. "Despite certain challenges in the past, the university has achieved much, and it holds its place in the higher education sector with pride." Cllr Mahabeer added that he is enthusiastic to be part of the journey of growth, innovation, and the repositioning of CUT. He is excited to be part of the university community, and believes that, as a collective, CUT shall claim its place as a leading university in South Africa.

"On behalf of the entire CUT community, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Cllr Mahabeer on his appointment as Chairperson of Council. His extensive experience, vision, and commitment to advancing higher education are truly inspiring, and we are confident that his leadership will guide us into a bright and promising future," said Dr Sally Dzingwa, CUT Registrar.

The South African Institution of Civil Engineering elects CUT's Prof. Jaco Gericke as a fellow - a milestone for him and the university



Prof. Jaco Gericke was elected as a Fellow of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) on 22 October 2024, marking a pivotal moment in his career, the Department of Civil Engineering, and the University at large.

As a recognised corporate member of SAICE and Professional Engineer registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), Prof. Gericke embodies excellence within the civil engineering profession, showcasing responsibility and initiative alongside professional experience, both in industry and academia. As Head of Department (HOD), he also leads the Department of Civil Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology (FEBIT), where his achievements boost the department's standing and the broader faculty and university community.

Prof. Gericke said the recognition within the civil engineering community humbles him. "What is more important is that my contributions over the years did not go unnoticed. It shows that such recognition can be achieved through dedication, effective leadership, and a steadfast commitment to the profession."

In her heartfelt congratulatory message to Prof. Gericke on his prestigious achievement, Prof. Muthoni Masinde, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology said "On behalf of the faculty, I extend our warmest congratulations to Prof. Gericke for being elected as a Fellow of SAICE. This prestigious recognition not only reflects his outstanding personal achievements but also enhances the reputation and professionalism of the Department of Civil Engineering. We take immense pride in his presence among us and in celebrating this significant recognition. His success serves as a powerful example to all of us, illustrating that such honours are within reach through dedication, leadership, and commitment to the profession. As Head of Department, he has demonstrated what is possible, and we trust that his achievement will inspire the entire faculty towards further excellence. We are also proud to count him among us."

CUT's Prof. Theron brings home the 2024 SANRAL SAICE National Award for the Pothole Eradication Programme



Prof. Lize Theron (fourth from left) said her team and students are highly motivated by this award.

Prof. Lize Theron, Associate Professor: Civil Engineering, brought home the 2024 SANRAL SAICE National award under the Community Based Project category. The SANRAL SAICE Awards are prestigious accolades in the field of civil engineering in South Africa. The award was brought to life by an innovative initiative and a potential game-changer project that has transformed the road maintenance approach in all provinces (The Pothole Eradication Programme). The project is a collaboration between the Department of Community Safety, Roads & Transport, CivilLab@CUT, Civil Engineering Department, and CUT research partners.

According to Prof. Theron, a community-based project category specifically recognises projects that have made a positive contribution to communities. "A commendation validates the real-world impact and relevance of the institution's work and being 'highly commended' means that the academic institution's project was recognised as exemplary in its field. The SANRAL SAICE National Awards celebrate and reward outstanding individuals and projects in civil engineering and our project took the cup! Receiving a commendation provides visibility for our university among important players in the civil engineering sector. Being recognised at national level serves as a motivation for our students and the faculty to pusue further excellence in community-oriented engineering projects."

She added, "our recognition might open more networking opportunities with the giants of this industry, which will lead to more collaborations and partnerships in the future. The commendation also serves as a benchmark for the quality of work expected in community-based engineering projects, which can guide future initiatives."

The awards aim to project excellence in areas such as technical innovation, community impact, and international contributions; showcase the civil engineering profession's contributions to society; encouraging high standards of practice and innovation within the industry and inspire the next generation of civil engineers by recognising young talent and student achievements.



Men at work: some of the youth who play a pivotal role in fixing the provincial roads. Since its launch in November 2023, the project has already created over 650 jobs in all five districts of the province. The project's ambitious goal is to repair 70,000 square meters of road sections. The ongoing research being conducted will ensure that the solutions implemented for long-term road maintenance are sustainable. This Pothole Repair Programme is a shining example of the positive impact of collaboration, innovation, and community empowerment. The initiative invests in infrastructure and human capital and leads to not only improved road conditions but also a more prosperous future for all Free State residents.

CUT Recognised as the First African University to Earn ACEEU Engaged University Accreditation



The Central University of Technology has reached a historic milestone, becoming the first African university to be awarded the prestigious Engaged University Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU). This award coincides with the university's 20th anniversary as a university of technology. The recognition solidifies CUT's position as a leader in innovation, entrepreneurship and engagement in higher education across Africa.

CUT's accreditation was officially conferred at the 2024 ACEEU Forum and Award Ceremony, which took place from 18 - 20 September 2024, at NOVA University Lisbon in Portugal. The event brought together thought leaders, researchers and academic institutions from across the globe to discuss the future of entrepreneurship, innovation and societal engagement in higher education.

Representing CUT at the forum were Prof. Wendy Setlalentoa, Dean of Humanities, and Fred Matongo, Director of Innovation & Technology Transfer, who also accepted the award on behalf of the university. The forum provided valuable insights into global trends in higher education and offered opportunities for CUT to establish strategic partnerships with other universities.

This accreditation aligns with CUT's strategic vision of becoming a leading African university of technology, shaping the future through innovation. It reflects the university's ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurial education, advancing applied research and making a tangible impact on local communities through engaged learning.

When highlighting the significance of this achievement, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal said "receiving the ACEEU Engaged University Accreditation is a monumental achievement for CUT and a direct reflection of our commitment to innovation, entrepreneurship and engagement. This recognition underscores our role in shaping the future of African higher education by empowering our students to create real-world impact."

CUT's recognition by ACEEU demonstrates the university's role as a pioneer in integrating entrepreneurship and innovation into its curriculum and research. The university's focus on work-ready graduates, applied research and projects that address societal challenges has been integral to this success.

This accreditation is a reflection of CUT's strategic efforts to:

- Develop work-ready, entrepreneurial graduates prepared to tackle the challenges of today's world.
- Foster a culture of research and innovation, driving technological and societal advancements.
- Engage with communities to make a positive social impact, particularly in addressing regional and national development priorities.

As CUT continues to grow its reputation as a leader in entrepreneurial and engaged education, the university looks forward to expanding its partnerships, research collaborations and community engagement initiatives both locally and globally. The ACEEU accreditation marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in CUT's journey toward Vision 2030.

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