



University of Venda donates food parcels to Vhembe District Command Council

On Saturday, 02 May 2020 the University of Venda handed fifty (50) food parcels to the Vhembe District Command Council. The Director Communications and Marketing, Dr Takalani Dzaga handed the food parcels on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni. The food parcels were received by Vhembe District Executive Mayor, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda, who is also the Chairperson of the District Command Council.

The food parcels were sponsored by one of UNIVEN contractors Nanzu Trading. In his acceptance speech, the Chairperson of Vhembe District Command Council and Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Nenguda appreciated the donation and made a commitment that the team shall endeavour by care and diligence to ensure that the food parcels are handed to the needy families. He commended the University leadership for having considered it necessary to channel the food parcels through the District Command Council. The District Command Council has been established in terms of clause 6.8.2 of the Government Gazette no. 11063 of 25 March 2020, which directs municipalities to establish the District Command Council in order to participate in joint district and provincial disaster management structures to ensure a coordinated response to COVID-19.



Above L-R: Cllr Dowelani Nenguda and Dr Takalani Dzaga

When handing over the food parcels, the Director Communications and Marketing, Dr Dzaga made a call to other stakeholders to come on Board and assist vulnerable communities amid COVID 19 pandemic. On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Dr Dzaga expressed a word of thanks to the management of Nanzu Trading

for their generosity and extending a helping hand to the needy. The handover event took place at the Thulamela Municipality warehouse which is situated few kilometres away from Thohoyandou Town. In attendance was the Mayor of Thulamela Municipality, Cllr Avhashoni Tshifhango and members of the District Department of Social Development.



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UNIVEN UPDATE FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL



*Vice Chancellor and Principal,
Dr. Bernard Nthambeleni*

I hope that all members of the UNIVEN Community are still healthy and safe during this unprecedented time caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciate that you are continuing to comply with the lockdown regulations which are intended to curb the spread of the Coronavirus.

COVID-19 pandemic had ushered a massive impact and challenges on all spheres of our livelihoods and institutions of higher learning and our university is not invulnerable to this situation.

Despite many known structural challenges that our university is exposed to, we have managed to make a considerable progress in ensuring that we continue with learning and teaching. We have reached an agreement with all mobile telephone companies to provide a zero-rated data to allow our staff and students access to certain designated university websites, blackboard, library services and institutional repositories. Let me convey my gratitude to our staff, who actively took the responsibility of ensuring that we come up with a coordinated response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have adopted an approach informed by the principle that no student will be left behind due to circumstances beyond their control as far as access to e-learning is concerned. We are engaging the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and other private business entities to raise funds to assist staff and students with the necessary means to fully participate in the e-learning and blended learning. The progress with one of the private business entities has reached an advanced stage.

I submitted our detailed estimated expenditures which are anticipated as a result of COVID-19 to the attention of DHET through Universities South Africa (USAf) which is being considered by government.

Despite some connectivity issues reported, I am encouraged by the progress reports that I received from time to time from the academic division that showed that majority of our staff and students are participating on the

e-learning using different communications platforms. To ensure that no student is left behind, Senior Management Committee (SMC) had resolved that we will supplement our e-learning with other teaching and learning modalities that includes the delivery of hard copy materials and use of different sites, like the post office in augmenting our reach.

As an institution of higher learning, we are expected to make our profound contribution and impact in the fight against COVID-19. In this regard, SMC mandated the Director Research and Innovation to work together with the Deans of Schools to lead the coordination of all research and research-related activities on COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Management Committee (EMC) will make necessary budget provision to support this initiative.

As you are aware that our university had since 2015 embarked on a yearly programme to provide all our first entering students with tablets, we are in a better space as far as the provision of learning devices as compared with several universities in the country. Informed by the recent government revised declaration that declare universities an essential service for the purposes of delivery of IT equipment, our Senior Management Committee resolved to fast track the delivery of tablets to all registered 2020 first entering students. The team led by the DVC Operations will put a plan to ensure safe delivery of this learning devices to students at their residential addresses through a courier service.

During this period of lockdown, our university continues to be operational, our academic staff, as well as administrative and professional staff are working from home. I attended and still scheduled to attend several virtual meetings called by USAf South African Technology Network and DHET. From our university governance side, we hosted several virtual meetings of committees of Council and the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO). I continued to Chair our monthly scheduled Executive Management Committee (EMC) virtual meetings which are now happening every second week due to the urgent demands that arises out of the lockdown.

In our last Senior Management Committee meeting, we reiterated the importance of limiting face to face contact until such time it is deemed safe to do so. This entails that there will be no face to face teaching and learning. We will continue to deliver teaching remotely apart from the controlled and limited return to Campus for some final year students and Post-graduates who would be required to use laboratories facilities as determined by the Deans of Schools.

The President of the Republic announced the relaxation of the lockdown regulations from level 5 to level 4 a few days ago. This relaxation will allow limited movements to certain institutions and business entities, We are waiting for the guidelines by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology about the relaxation of the lockdown regulations as far as the universities are concerned.

During this national lockdown period, our university is unenthusiastically bidding farewell to one of our outstanding staff, Mrs Rose Mgobo who Joined the University of Venda as the Director of Finance in 2016. Allow me to take this moment to express our profound gratitude to Mrs Mgobo and to let her know how interesting and rewarding it was working with someone of her calibre. It has been an honor working with a wonderful colleague like you over these past years. Thank you for your dedication, kindness and many hours that you have invested in your work to make our university a success. On behalf of the UNIVEN community, I wish you the best of luck and continued SUCCeSS in your new assignment.

As I conclude, I want to thank our security personnel for their splendid commitment in safeguarding all university properties during this lockdown period.

In order to continue contributing to the global endeavour to curb the spread of the coronavirus, I encourage every member of

the University Community to practice good hygiene, through'

Frequently sanitising or washing your hands with water and soap for at least twenty seconds;

- Covering your mouth with your elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing; Avoiding touching face;
- Avoiding close contact with other people;
- Practicing social distancing and
- Wearing a face mask when going to public or crowded places,

I will continue to provide you with updates on decisions taken by the University management and government, particularly the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology on matters relating to COVID-19 pandemic and the functioning of our University.

Kind regards,

Dr. Bernard Nthambeleni

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

University of Venda Partners with the Department of Basic Education to Broadcast Lessons to Grade 12 Learners

In order to ensure that teaching and learning at High School continues even during the national lockdown, in partnership with the Vhembe District Department of Education, UNIVEN Radio broadcast lessons for a period of three weeks, effective Monday 13 April 2020.

The Department of Education Vhembe District has put together distance learning packages, through various social media platforms to engage learners during the lockdown period.

The lessons, targeting Term 2 content for selected Grade 12 subjects, are presented by local teachers. This endeavour will go a long way in assisting learners in catching up on lost time in preparation for the mid-year examinations, should the lockdown be lifted.

Schools in South Africa were closed earlier than normal, on 18 March 2020, due to the declaration of the State of Disaster by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, as a containment measure to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

Know Your Student Campaign

CHETL - ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

EFFECTIVE ONLINE TEACHING FOR LEARNING GUIDE

The Academic Development Unit (ADU), included in its 2020 plan, a campaign called "know your students". The purpose of this campaign is to encourage academics and practitioners to rethink and share their teaching practices in order to accommodate every student in their modules. As teaching unfolds in modules, it is critical to be guided by the principles of care in order to achieve maximum student success. Success is not just passing a module and a qualification, but it is about being able to think out of the box (epistemic individual) at the end of a study journey.

ADU's belief about knowing students are underpinned in part by Jean Watson (2008)'s Theory of Human Caring/Caring Science. Watson provides 10 Carative factors which are commonly understood as 'Caritas Processes'. Only a few are pointed below:

It is common understanding that in most of academics/lecturers or university teachers and academic developers at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and in the higher education spaces in general, online teaching is novel. The novelty of the space in relation to online teaching and learning brings in so much to learn and unlearn as we navigate the space with our students. This short piece shares generic practices that might make teaching manageable in various disciplines bearing in mind the kind of students that dominate the context at UNIVEN.

Easy guide to effective online teaching for learning

Shape and size of my class

- It is obvious you know the size of your class

- It is critical to know the number of students with special needs and the exact needs they should be provided support with
- Have a sense of the profile of your students (socio-economic background, schooling background, computer literacy skills, motivation levels etc.)

Purpose of module

- Let the students know the module competencies of the NQF level of the module
- Let students know the learning outcomes of the module
- Let students write down their expectations of the module
- Why they enrolled for the module in the first place
- In fact, what contribution will their module make in the qualification they are studying towards
- Also share your views about the possibilities that the module is capable of bringing into the lives of students after they have shared their views about the module.

The teacher and support system

- MenTuts: For effective online teaching, mentors and tutors (MenTuts) play a very critical role in enhancing learning. Therefore, it is encouraged that university teachers/academics/lecturers should establish teaching teams/partners in their work. A pool of MenTuts, language assistants or teaching assistants should be created to assist in keeping discussion

forums of the module alive at all times. This could be through WhatsApp, Blackboard or any other media preferred by students of that particular module.

- Large class management: similarly, a pool of MenTuts should be created and there should be a separate discussion group with them via WhatsApp, LMS or email. Meeting times should be scheduled with them at least once a week to plan for the week's discussion topics and how to handle the discussions. Together with MenTuts, a question bank should be created, of which the questions can form topics for discussion in tutorial sessions. MenTuts have to come back and share what group members have discussed in their tutorial sessions. In so doing further engagements take place and more learning takes place.
- Academic literacies: Academic literacies are not skills that students necessarily and universally bring with from high school, therefore, it is the module lecturer's responsibility to ensure such skills are strengthened and aligned to the discipline. Writing assistants are always available to assist students with such skills as the production of well-structured pieces of writing of assignment essays or research reports and reading and study skills, etc. Contact Ms Hlayisani Mboweni for direction to such individuals allocated for the respective Schools.
- Learning platforms: Multiple learning platforms such as WhatsApp, LMS and Zoom should be used to tackle a single lesson. For example, upload a PowerPoint

presentation on Blackboard, then talk to the PowerPoint on a WhatsApp voice note, then let tutors build a discussion forum on Blackboard.

- Work with MenTuts and language assistants to produce webinars and videos. For guidance on this contact the e-learning team headed by Mr Willie Xazela on willie.xazela@univen.ac.za.
 - Refer students to a variety of open access material in the respective disciplines. There are a variety of open access material on the internet such as this: <https://www.publicbooks.org/public-books-database/>
 - Assessment and assessment preparations: Avoid giving students a set of possible test questions. The question bank should be enough to serve as a guide of the kind of questions to be expected in the module. It is always helpful to get back to the critical cross-field outcomes for guidance on how to set questions that are appropriate for the level of study and for achieving the expected learning outcomes.
- Remember that this is assessment for learning (formative assessment). Try and create questions that encourage problem solving exercises. High order questions are important. Think back of the module outcomes and then create questions that attempt to test students on their knowledge and understanding and application of the expected outcomes.
- Limitations of technology: As a university teacher, it is worth noting that a virtual classroom has got its limitations. Teach with the thought that some students are lagging due to accessibility and reliability of technology in their contexts.

Some students might face challenges with reliable internet coverage, as a result work that can be completed in one hour on a face to face classroom might take two days to complete. The importance of online teaching is that if a session does not take place in real time, students are free to access it at any time. However, the downside of it is that they may not be able to ask questions for clarity but there is always a way out. This is where tutors and mentors become very handy in the respective modules. They take care of student queries and comments while the lecturer continues to plan ahead.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic is not all negative but it brings innovation in teaching in the new world of which teaching and learning forms part of.

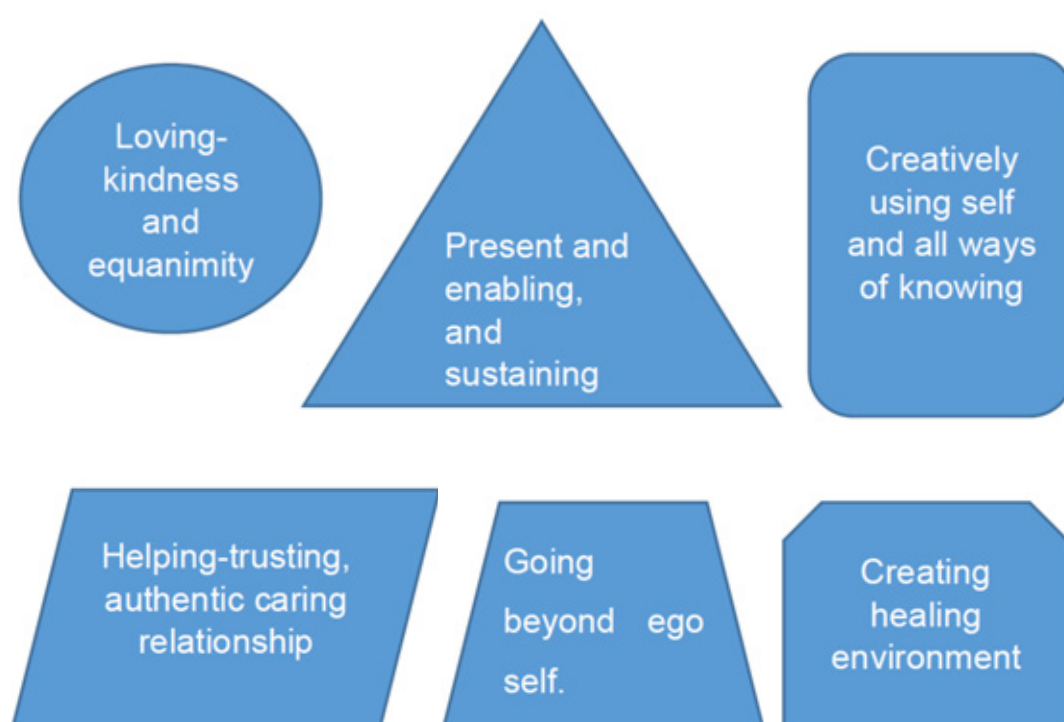
Below are contact details for any teaching and learning related matter.

Dr Mary Masehela (HoD)
on mary.masehela@univen.ac.za.

Dr Fhatuwani Ravhuhali
on email Fhatuwani.ravhuhali@univen.ac.za,

Ms Hlayi Mboweni
on hlayisani.mboweni@univen.ac.za

Mr Nndweleni Mathase
on email Nndweleni.mathase@univen.ac.za



Some of the Carative factors which are commonly understood as 'Caritas Processes'

Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL)

E-Learning Unit

Some of the services offered:

1. E-Learning Unit will assist to activate your course module on myUniven\Blackboard (Bb).
 2. Assist on building your Online Course Module – Adding learning guides, notes, slides, creating assignments, creating tests, marking tests and assignments etc. Manuals have been compiled for students and staff, are distributed through various channels and can be provided again and again on request.
 3. Teaching assistants, mentors and tutors can be assisted to provide their services online.
 4. Help you conduct an online teaching evaluation by your students on a Bb course module. The evaluation link can be emailed to your students if you have their email addresses. This service will be provided on request through the CHETL Academic Development Unit (ADU). This service is provided only if you have already claimed or activated your myUniven\Bb course with students added. No direct requests for online evaluations to E-Learning will be entertained. ADU team can be contacted at:
 - a. HOD: Dr Mary Masehela, mary.masehela@univen.ac.za,
 - b. Senior EDP: Dr Fhatuwani Ravhuhali, Fhatuwani.ravhuhali@univen.ac.za
 - c. EDP: Ms. Hlayi Mboweni, hlayisani.mboweni@univen.ac.za
 - d. Administrator: Mr. Nndweleni Mathase, Nndweleni.mathase@univen.ac.za
 5. Requests for assistance must be sent to:
 - a. elarningsupport@univen.ac.za for staff support.
 - b. myuniven@univen.ac.za for student support.
 - c. Mohleiwane.mothisi@univen.ac.za for assistance on online testing, assignments and related training.
- NB: Please go through the provided manual(s) before asking for help where possible. The number of requests is expected to be significantly high during this lockdown period.
6. E-Learning Team members:
 - a. E-Learning Help Desk:
Mr. Thuso Matumba, thuso.matumba@univen.ac.za
 - b. E-Learning Help Desk:
Mr. Tshimangadzo Monyai, tshimangadzo.monyai@univen.ac.za
 - c. Junior E-Learning Practitioner:
Mr. Donald Mothisi, Mohleiwane.mothisi@univen.ac.za
 - d. HEAD: E-Learning: Mr. Willie Xazela, willie.xazela@univen.ac.za

Recipient of Fulbright South African Research Scholar for the 2020-2021 academic year



The University of Venda's Prof Joseph Baloyi was awarded a Fulbright South African Research Scholar for the 2020-2021 academic year by the USA government. He is the current Deputy Dean of the School of Agriculture and Head of Department of Animal Science. Prof Baloyi will be going to the University of Wyoming, Wyoming State in the USA for six months next year from 01 January to 30 June 2021.

In collaboration with Professor Anowar Islam of University of Wyoming, Prof Baloyi will be evaluating the nutritive value of some agricultural forages and industrial by-products as alternative protein sources in livestock nutrition using some of the latest research technologies in Animal Science. By this award, Prof Baloyi has become a member of the prestigious Fulbright Scholars. A big congratulations to Prof Joseph Baloyi.

COVID-19

How can people protect themselves?



Wash hands
thoroughly with soap



Cover your face
when coughing and
sneezing



Face masks optional -
scientists doubt their
effectiveness

LindoKuhle at the Futures Commonwealth Workshop



LindoKuhle Pertunia Zwane, an Honours student in African Studies at the University of Venda, participated in the 3rd Commonwealth Futures workshop at the Ritson Campus, Hotel School Conference Centre of The Durban University of Technology (DUT). The workshop was hosted by DUT in partnership with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the British Council from 11-14 March 2020.

The workshop hosted 60 formidable student leaders from Commonwealth countries including India, Canada, Nigeria, Uganda and the United Kingdom. The workshop was intended to stimulate commonwealth students to find ways to drive peaceful and sustainable solutions in their campuses and communities. The workshop was themed "Reimagining Peace". Students shared their individual experiences and perceptions pertaining various global challenges such as climate change, equality and Gender-Based Violence. The workshop included many activities throughout the week such as dinner at the Ushaka Marine Aquarium,

Cultural night and a tour to the Ghandi settlement in Phoenix. The Commonwealth Futures Workshop also celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi.

Not only did the workshop see student leaders connected in the language of peace and influencing positive change in society, but it also brought inspirational-powerful panellists who facilitated robust discussions about ethical leadership and activism. One of the Panellists spoke about the importance of a strong state of mind in leadership. "You must know what you stand for and stick through it". In her talk Ms Janine Hicks, an activist, Coordinator and Lecturer for the Street Law programme, LLM Constitutional and Human Rights Litigation, and Employment Discrimination Modules at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN), encouraged students to get individuals with decision making power to become interested in the issue they are trying to address.

LindoKuhle an Honours student in African Studies, an activist and a founding President of Aphrodite Global, a student organisation that aims to disrupts patterns of GBV and advocates for women empowerment says being amongst the Commonwealth's committed student leaders has made her see the world in a different eye. She looks forward to working with relevant individuals and stakeholders to address Gender Based Violence in and outside the University community.

"You must know what you stand for and stick through it".



To motivate other students, this is what LindoKuhle had to say upon return:

It is always an exciting yet nerve wrecking experience to meet other young people who share a similar vision as that of your own and it is only fair that you compare your own styles of leadership to theirs and evaluate thereof. I knew this workshop was going to be a major learning curve for me, but it has exceeded my expectations. Young people all over the world are determined to drive positive change about issues that affect

not only their immediate surroundings but the globe. We robustly discussed climate change, the state of education, equality and genderbased violence in different aspects of the world,

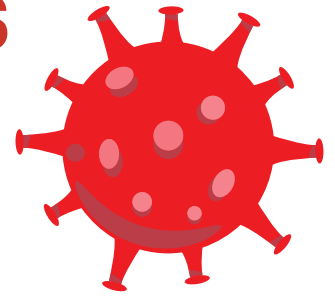
I am grateful to have been selected to be part of such formidable young leaders, indeed my work is touching a couple of lives and will do even more now. I am grateful to UNIVEN, my mentors and my fellow students the future leaders who want to start now to influence positive change in society



LindoKuhle at the Futures Commonwealth Workshop continued...



UNIVEN joins other donors in the fight against hunger amid COVID-19



The University of Venda's Innovative Growth Company (UIGC) joins other donors who are supporting the vulnerable communities within the Vhembe District Municipality through contribution to the Vhembe District Food Bank. The handover event took place on Tuesday 05 May 2020 at Vhembe District Food Bank Warehouse, within Thulamela Local Municipality. The Vhembe District Food Bank has recently been launched by the District Command Council Chairperson, the Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality Cllr Dowelani Nenguda.

On behalf of the University Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, the

CEO of UIGC, Dr John Mudau, accompanied by Director of Communications and Marketing, Dr Takalani Dzaga handed 96 bags of butternuts. The butternuts were produced from Barotta Farm owned by UIGC. The butternuts were received by the Vhembe District Executive Mayor, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda. When receiving the donation, the Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Nenguda said in order to respond to COVID -19, the District Command Council has established a Food Bank for the purpose of receiving and distributing food to the vulnerable communities within the Vhembe District Municipality.

The Executive Mayor mentioned that he was grateful for the donation particularly because this donation was made less than five days, after the University had handed 50 food parcels to the District Command Council. He made a declaration that the donation will be distributed in a principled manner and that they'll circumvent any corrupt activities in the distribution of donated items. He urged all those who were present to encourage other potential donors to make more donations towards the District Food Bank. He further mentioned that working with different stakeholders within the District is part of the Vhembe District Development model which was launched on 06 March

2020 and he commended UNIVEN for the role that it continues to play to demonstrate its commitment to nurture the relationship between the two institutions.

Dr Mudau shared with the audience the roles and responsibilities of UIGC and the University's strategic direction of developing towns within the Vhembe District Municipalities into the University Towns. The handover event was blessed by the presence of the Mayor of Thulamela Municipality, Cllr Avhashoni Tshifhango, some Councillors and members of the District Department of Social Development and UNIVEN Director of Communications and Marketing.



Dr John Mudau handing over a bag of butternut to Cllr Dowelani Nenguda



Above L-R: Dr Takalani Dzaga and Dr John Mudau



Above L-R: Dr Takalani Dzaga, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda and Dr John Mudau and Cllr Avhashoni Tshifhango



STUDENT SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING (CHETL), STUDENT COUNSELLING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (SCCDU) AND DISABILITY (DU) UNITS

During this time of lockdown, when you are required to self-isolate and not engage in needed social contact, you may be inclined to feeling alone, uncertain and stressed. That might be worse for those already experiencing mental health struggles of sorts. These struggles may be exacerbated by the inability to attend face-to-face psychotherapy sessions. Added to these issues are the worry, stress and anxiety associated with all the "fake" news flooding the social media. Lockdown, social distancing, social isolation and quarantine do not necessarily mean that all social contact must cease.

Student Counselling and Career Development Unit (SCCDU) is available to you during the lockdown period and beyond.

Students can continue and maintain access with therapists for counselling sessions via telephone or WhatsApp during normal working hours.

Telephone counselling is available.
Please contact Dr L V Mathye @ 082 782 2041
and/or Dr GN Dama @ 073 902 0585.

STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The Disabled Student Unit (DSU) understands the Lockdown as announced by the President of the country and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda. As a country we are hoping that we will overcome this pandemic and go back to our normal life. DSU requests all students to use their assistive devices to enhance learning during this difficult time. DSU staff is available to assist you during this tough time. For queries pertaining to the use of assistive devices contact the following staff members:

Mr Gadisi at +27824823083

or Mr Sirwali at 0793640334

or Mr Macheque at +7780203429.

For Counselling contact
Dr Mbuvha at 083 444 7475 and
Mrs Matodzi at 071 308 9723

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your
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**If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the
tip-off hotline - 0800 212 755 / email: univenhotline@tip-offs.com**