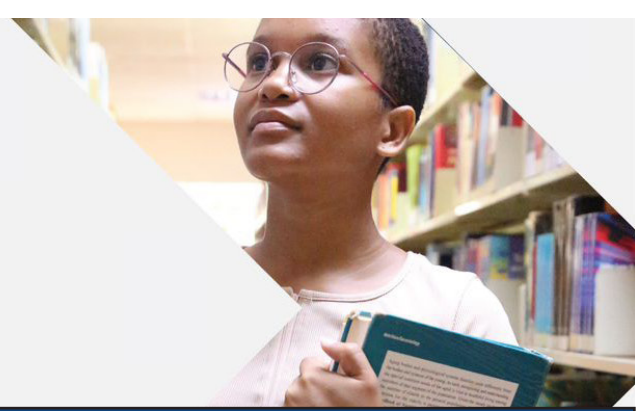




University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## University of Venda Kicks Off First-Year Journey with Exciting Orientation Programme



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted a grand official opening of the orientation programme to welcome its first time entering students at the University Auditorium. This highly anticipated event marked the beginning of an exciting academic journey for new students, setting the tone for their integration into university life. The official opening of orientation session took place on Friday, 31 January 2025.

Professor Tawanda Runhare, the Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education, delivered a compelling welcome address to the first-time entering students (FTENS) at the University of Venda.

Acknowledging the students' exceptional achievement in securing admission, he emphasised that they are among a select group chosen from over 100,000 applicants, urging them to recognise the rarity of this privilege and seize the opportunity with both hands. He described the transition from high school to university as a thrilling yet demanding experience, advising students not to dwell on past accomplishments but to focus on the hard work ahead. Professor Runhare also highlighted that orientation extends beyond this session, with essential faculty and departmental introductions that students should not miss. His address underscored the importance of academic commitment,

personal development, and active community participation as the cornerstones of success at UNIVEN.



**On Photo:** Prof Tawanda Runhare, Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education

The official opening address was delivered by Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teaching and Learning. In her address, she warmly welcomed students to the University of Venda, acknowledging their hard work and determination in reaching this milestone. Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele expressed the shift from structured high school learning to independent university study, emphasising the importance of self-discipline, time management, and proactive engagement. “Success is framed as a product of resilience, consistency, and collaboration, with encouragement to seek support when needed,” said Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele. She stressed balancing studies with social life, participating in extracurricular activities, and embracing personal growth. Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele said students are reminded that challenges are opportunities for learning and that their time at university is about more than just earning a degree—it is about shaping their future.



**On Photo:** Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teaching and Learning

Various university units took turns to enlighten students about support structures available to them. Ms Makhadzi Makheda, representing Facilities Management, focused on waste management, Mrs Uanda Ndou, Director, Human Resources, and shared important information regarding safety and student welfare on campus, and Mr Vusi Mokoena, the SRC president welcomed students to the University of Venda, sharing his personal journey of perseverance. He recounted his struggles upon arriving at the university with limited financial resources and how support from others helped him succeed. He urged students to value their education and work hard, emphasising that no one is useless—everyone has value when placed in the right environment. Using a parable of a carpenter and a fallen tree, he highlighted the importance of recognising one’s potential and concluded by encouraging students to stay focused and make the most of their opportunities.

The programme also included insightful presentations from four faculty managers, including Mr Takalani Nyelisani, Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Health Sciences; Dr Mafemani Baloyi, Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education; Ms Mampuele Legodi, Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law; and Mrs Julia Sigama, Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture.

Other notable speakers included Ms Shumani Nembudani, Senior Manager at the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation; Dr Mlungisi Ganto, representing the Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation, and Commercialisation (DCEIIC); Ms Tshilidzi Ramulondi, Director of Revenue and Financial Aid; Prof Lindiwe Mulaudzi, Director of the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHETL); Mr Andisani Mathelemusa, Head of Student Governance, representing the Student Affairs Department; and Adv Thanyani Mphephu, Head of Legal Services, representing the Legal Services Department.





**On Photo:** *Dr Joel Baloyi, the University Registrar*

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Dr Joel Baloyi, the University Registrar. He expressed gratitude to speakers, and students for their active participation. Dr Baloyi's key messages included the importance of responsible behaviour, discipline, and focus on studies to avoid exclusion. Students were urged to make the most of their privileged opportunity, as only a select few were admitted.

He reminded students to make wise financial decisions, prioritise their studies, and avoid distractions that could derail their success. They were encouraged to build relationships within their faculties, develop leadership skills, and contribute to sustainability efforts.

This orientation served as a vital introduction to university life, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation among new students. As they embark on this new chapter, the University of Venda reaffirms its commitment to "Creating Future Leaders" through excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.

With this strong foundation, first-year students are set to navigate their academic journey with confidence, determination, and a supportive university community guiding them every step of the way.

## Honouring Excellence of a Trailblaser on a Gala Dinner as UNIVEN Bids Farewell to Prof Nosisi Nellie Feza

On 29 January 2025, an atmosphere of gratitude and admiration filled the Premier Hotel as the University of Venda (UNIVEN) bid a heartfelt farewell to Prof Nosisi Feza, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Research and Postgraduate Studies. The joint farewell dinner, attended by the Council and Senior Management Committee (SMC), celebrated Prof Feza's contributions to the university's academic landscape.

for Prof Feza's unwavering commitment to advancing postgraduate studies. He lauded her in transformative leadership as DVC for Research and Postgraduate Studies at UNIVEN. Prof Nthambeleni highlighted her role in strengthening the university's research capacity, driving institutional change, and championing the empowerment of young and female researchers.



*Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda*

A moving tribute and well wishes was alluded by Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who expressed deep appreciation

"Her contributions have elevated the university's academic standing, ensuring sustainable policies and impactful reforms. As she moves on to a new role, the university extends its best wishes, acknowledging her legacy and confidence in her continued success." Said Prof Nthambeleni.

The evening commenced with an opening and welcome address by Mr Botwe Kraziya, Chief Operating Officer, who set the tone reflecting on a pivotal learning experience early in his career, emphasising the importance of collaboration, mentorship, and accountability in higher education.

He shared a personal anecdote about budgeting challenges and acknowledged the invaluable guidance of Professor Feza, who not only helped him navigate the complexities of university finance but also shaped his understanding of the sector. He expressed deep respect and gratitude as well as highlighting her significant impact on his professional growth and the importance of recognising those who have influenced our lives and expressing confidence in continued collaboration.

Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director of Marketing, Branding and Communication outlined the purpose and significance of the gathering, emphasising that the event intended to honour and celebrate the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies.

The highlight of the evening was the farewell message delivered by Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, DVC for Teaching and Learning to Professor Nosisi Feza, honouring her legacy as a dedicated scholar, advocate for women, and leader in research and postgraduate studies. She praised Prof Feza's integrity, courage, and compassion, highlighting her impact on students and the university's academic standing. Expressing deep gratitude and personal loss, she wished her success in her future endeavours, reminding her that she is not alone on her journey. Her message concluded with a biblical blessing (Exodus 13:21), acknowledging Prof Feza's enduring influence and inspiration.

The Council representative, Dr Ryneth Mbhele expressed gratitude to Professor Feza, acknowledging her transformative impact on research at the university. She expressed how Prof Feza brought clarity, support, and advocacy for women, ensuring lasting benefits. She wished her success and encouraged her to continue being her honest, fearless self.



*Prof Nosisi Feza, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies*

In her response, Prof Nosisi Feza expressed heartfelt gratitude to UNIVEN for the support and collaboration. Prof Feza reflected on her journey at the university, emphasising her upbringing, leadership style, and deep love for students and staff. She described her challenges, pushing colleagues to excellence, and her vision of the university as a diamond that needed polishing. She urged staff to see students as the core of the institution and to embrace collaboration and transformation. She concluded with a call to the university leadership for continued support, unity, and a commitment to the university's growth. Her words resonated with warmth and appreciation, leaving an impression to everyone. The evening concluded with a vote of thanks by Mrs Beauty Mutheiwana, Director of Supply Chain Management and Expenditure, who extended sincere gratitude to Mr Kraziya, the COO, for his warm welcome, and to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal for reminding the audience of the significance of the DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies position, highlighting Professor Feza's impactful contributions in research output, women and young researchers empowerment. "To Professor Feza, thank you for sharing your personal journey, lessons, and your experiences at UNIVEN, as well as your constructive engagement with staff. Your commitment to the university is valued, and we look forward to continued collaboration." Said Mrs Mutheiwana.



*Group photo of Prof Nosisi Feza (middle) with members of Council*



*On photo: Prof Nosisi Feza with some members of Senior Management Committee*



The farewell dinner was not just a send-off; it was a tribute to a visionary leader whose impact will be felt for years to come.

## The Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights champions human rights and social justice locally and beyond

The Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights (IMCHPR), established in 2001 at the University of Venda (UNIVEN), is dedicated to advancing social justice and human rights through research, education, and advocacy. The Centre is named in honour of Justice Ismail Mahomed, to recognise his significant contributions to human rights protection and social justice in South Africa. A distinguished South African jurist, Justice Mahomed was a significant figure in the civil rights movement and law during apartheid and was instrumental in shaping South Africa's post-apartheid legal landscape.



*Prof Ademola Oluborode Jegede, Director Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights*

Initially founded within the School of Law, since its resuscitation in 2022, the IMCHPR is now part of the Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law following the university's restructuring. Its core focus remains the fostering a culture of human rights protection and addressing social justice issues, including poverty, discrimination, and environmental injustice. It conducts interdisciplinary research on key human rights topics such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the rights of vulnerable populations. The IMCHPR engages in community outreach,

national and international collaborations, and provides advocacy on pressing social, environmental, and human rights issues.

The IMCHPR's activities include training and teaching, conducting research on climate justice, and carrying out advocacy in grassroots communities on human rights intersections with environmental and social justice issues. It has established strong local, national, and international partnerships with organisations such as the South Africa Human Rights Commission, Wits University, UFS, JAMMA International, and the Climate Mobility Africa Research Network. It is a member of the Association of Human Rights Institute (AHRI). Its collaborations foster teaching, research development and enhance advocacy efforts, including well received submissions to the United Nations Special Procedures on human rights and social justice issues.

The IMCHPR has made substantial contributions to both academic and community efforts, particularly through its involvement in postgraduate human rights law programs, research outputs, advocacy and partnerships with grassroots communities. It supports the development of future human rights lawyers and actively addresses issues such as migration, gender-based violence, and the environmental challenges faced by underserved communities. Aside from being a research hub of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, its key initiatives include working with local communities to address human rights violations, offering legal resources, and raising awareness through seminars and workshops. Additionally, the IMCHPR's collaboration with the South Africa Human Rights Commission and other organisations supports its advocacy

work, particularly concerning resource use, sustainable development, and climate justice.

The IMCHPR's future goals include expanding its role as a leading human rights institution, developing and offering bespoke training programmes to communities, and fostering continued partnerships to address emerging challenges such as climate change and technological impacts on human rights. It is also committed and open to collaboration for enhancing its teaching, training and research capabilities as well as increasing its visibility both locally and internationally, thus contributing to the broader human rights and social justice agenda at home and beyond.



*L-R: Prof Ademola Oluborode Jegede with interns, Reneilwe Thete, Ndzumbululo Mulaudzi and Bennet Netshishivhe*

**If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number 0800 212 755 or email: [univenhotline@tip-offs.com](mailto:univenhotline@tip-offs.com)**

**Improper conduct includes the following...**

- 1. Financial misconduct,**
- 2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,**
- 3. Health and safety risks,**
- 4. Plagiarism,**
- 5. Fraud and corruption.**