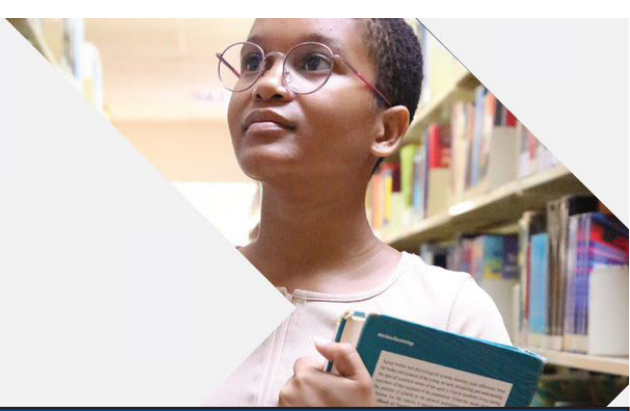




University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders

UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



SPECIAL EDITION | 12 May 2025 | SRC Leadership On The Move

Against All Odds, He Led: The Journey of Vusi Mokoena to SRC President



Kgautswane, a small village in the heart of Limpopo, has given rise to a shining example of resilience and determination: Mr Vusi Karabo Mokoena. On Tuesday, 13 May 2025, he will proudly walk across the graduation stage at the University of Venda Auditorium, receiving his BCom in Business Management degree—a milestone that marks far more than academic achievement.

Born and raised in Kgautswane, Ohrigstad, Limpopo Province, Vusi Karabo's path to university was anything but smooth. After arriving at the University of Venda on 5 January 2020, he faced nearly three months of uncertainty before gaining admission on 15 March. "It was one of the toughest moments of my life," he recalls. "I had left home with a dream to change my background after years of working on farms."

At just 18, Vusi was already working as an orange picker, later moving to a cold room in a butchery where he broke bones and meat for a living. *These early struggles shaped his determination to not just survive but thrive—and to ensure that others wouldn't suffer the same fate.*

Driven by a deep desire to serve, Vusi ran for Chairperson of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law in 2022 but was unsuccessful. However, he came back stronger in 2023 and won the position. His service didn't stop there—he became a tutor for Entrepreneurship and Business Management and also led as Chairperson of the National Union Municipal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Student-Preneur Division. His relentless dedication earned him the trust and admiration of his peers, who elected him as SRC President later that year.

"My journey has taught me that destiny helpers exist," Vusi says with humility. *"God always locates His grace to the lost sheep. Poverty can turn you into people's puppet if you don't act. No one is coming to save you—you have to pack your bags and move. Along the way, you'll find people who are meant to help you rise."*

Now pursuing his Honours in Business Management, Mr. Mokoena Vusi Karabo is not just graduating—he is setting an example for students across the country that greatness can come from the humblest beginnings.

Books Before Ballots: How Asekho Ngqandu Balances Leadership and Learning



In the bustling heart of Soweto, where ambition meets resilience, a young woman named Asekho Ngqandu began a journey that would not only change her life but inspire countless others. Born on 1 June 2002 in the Eastern Cape and raised in Soweto, Gauteng, Asekho's story is one of dedication, leadership, and a deep commitment to education.

Her academic path started at Somelulwazi Primary School, continuing through Freedom Park Secondary School, where her passion for language and the transformative power of education began to flourish. But her journey didn't stop at high school; it was only the beginning.

From 2020 to 2023, Asekho pursued a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Venda. Her academic dedication and love for language led her to complete a BA Honours in English Language Teaching in 2024.

While she prepares to walk the graduation stage on 16 May 2025, she is already climbing higher—currently pursuing her Master of Arts in English Language Studies.

But Asekho is not just an academic achiever—she is also a leader. As the current SRC Secretary General at the University of Venda, she balances the demanding responsibilities of student leadership with her academic pursuits, proving that the two can go hand in hand.

“Being in leadership should never mean neglecting your studies. In fact, it should push you to work even harder,” says Asekho. “We owe it to the students we represent to lead by example—not only in governance, but in classrooms too.”

Her story is a powerful reminder to all student leaders: leadership is about service, and the best way to serve is to empower yourself through education. As young leaders, SRC members have the platform to inspire—and Asekho is using hers to send a clear message: Put education first. Let your qualifications echo louder than your speeches.

To her fellow SRC members across South Africa, Asekho leaves this message:

“Leadership is temporary, but knowledge lasts forever. Let your legacy be built on books, degrees, and the change you inspired—both inside and outside the lecture halls.”

As young leaders, SRC members have the platform to inspire—and Asekho is using hers to send a clear message: Put education first. Let your qualifications echo louder than your speeches.

Leading with Purpose: John Lebogang Ndaka's Remarkable Journey from SRC President to Graduate

On Thursday, 15 May 2025, during the morning session at the University of Venda Auditorium, John Lebogang Ndaka will walk across the stage to receive his Bachelor of Arts degree, marking the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and leadership.

Born on 02 January 2001, in Kekana Gardens, Hammanskraal, John's journey has been anything but ordinary.

After completing his matric at Steve Biko Secondary School in 2020, John chose to pursue higher education at the University of Venda. From the outset, he demonstrated both academic excellence and a deep commitment to leadership, excelling in his studies while also stepping into the role of Student Representative Council (SRC) President in October 2023. As president, John showcased a remarkable ability to lead his peers through complex challenges with passion, resilience, and a clear vision for the university's betterment.

Throughout his tenure as SRC President, John became a beacon of leadership, advocating for the needs and interests of students while fostering an inclusive and dynamic campus environment. His dedication to service, paired with his strong academic performance, has left a lasting impression on both students and faculties alike. During his term, the University of Venda campus remained stable.

John's journey serves as an inspiration, not only to students at the University of Venda but to those in leadership roles across the country. He has proven that with hard work, focus, and a passion for making a difference, leadership and academic success are not mutually exclusive. To all fellow students involved in student leadership, John's story is a reminder that your time in leadership shapes not just your academic journey, but your legacy and the



future of your community.

As he graduates, John's story is far from over. With his skills, determination, and heart for service, he is set to continue making an impact wherever his journey takes him.

"For all who are in leadership today, remember: every challenge is an opportunity, and every step you take builds a foundation for a brighter tomorrow", said Ndaka as he encouraged other students who are in leadership.

John's story is a reminder that your time in leadership shapes not just your academic journey, but your legacy and the future of your community.

Stanley Rises to Academic and Leadership Excellence as He Continues His Academic Ascent



From the lecture halls of the University of Venda to the podium of academic distinction, Maduwa Ngelekanyo Stanley is charting a path marked by purpose, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to public service. As he prepares to don his graduation gown once again, his journey reflects not only academic success but a deep-rooted drive to make a lasting impact in the field of public administration

Ngelekanyo Stanley Maduwa, a dedicated scholar in the field of Public Administration, is set to mark another academic milestone as he graduates with a Bachelor of Public Administration Honours degree from the University of Venda. His journey through the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, under the Department of Public and Development Administration, has been one of commitment, perseverance, and clear vision for the future.

Stanley joined the University of Venda in 2021 and successfully completed his undergraduate studies, earning a Bachelor of Public

Administration degree. His passion for governance and development has driven him to pursue further academic excellence.

Later in 2021, his passion for student advocacy led him to the movement, where he was co-opted to manage student education matters. By 2022, his impact had grown significantly. He successfully ran for and served as the Faculty Project Officer for the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law during the 2022/23 academic year.

His leadership trajectory peaked in the 2023/24 academic year when he was elected Secretary-General of the Student Representative Council (SRC). In this role, Stanley led the SRC with focus and integrity, engaging in policy matters, student support, and institutional representation.

Following the completion of his SRC term, Stanley transitioned into a new role within the University's Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication, where he continued to sharpen his administrative acumen while contributing to the institution's public image and strategic communications.

On 13 May 2025, during the First Graduation Session (Morning), Stanley will formally receive his Honours degree, an important step in his expanding academic and professional journey. Not one to rest on his laurels, he has already enrolled for a Master of Administration degree.

His continued dedication to education and public service sets a strong example for aspiring students and signals his readiness to contribute meaningfully to South Africa's developmental goals. *As Ngelekanyo Stanley Maduwa transitions from Honours to Master's level, his journey is a testament to the value of education in shaping future leaders for the public sector.*