

NWU & U

ALUMNI magazine

AS ALUMNI



**Prof Dan
now leads
the NWU**

**NWU celebrates
10 years of
EXCELLENCE**

**Does education
in SA make
the grade?**



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

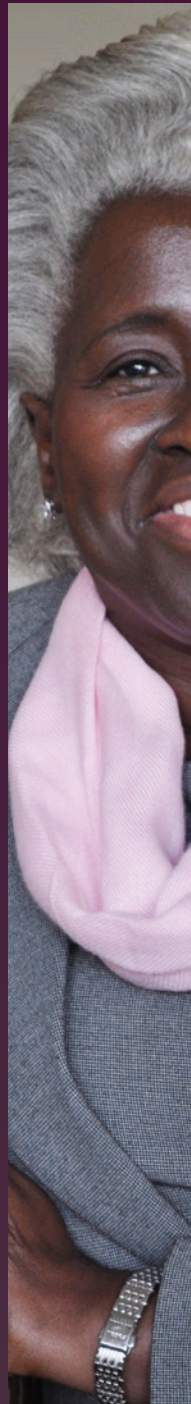


It all starts here™

FRONT PAGE: Prof Dan Kgwadi has been vice-chancellor of the NWU since 1 April 2014. Read more about him on p 9.

10

11



24



Content

Editorial

- 4 Message from the vice-chancellor
- 5 Change brings challenges and possibilities
NWU experts know their stuff
- 6 Messages from afar

News

- 7 International panel praises and cautions NWU
- 8 New leaders take the helm
- 9 From small beginnings comes greatness
for Dan Kgwadi
- 10 Mafikeng Campus boasts dynamic new rector
- 11 First years welcomed with NWU hospitality
- 12 Alumni celebrate in 2014
- 14 Campus news
- 16 We celebrate 10 years of growth
- 17 How effective is education in South Africa?

Profiles

- 20 Education is his passion
- 21 Anca seizes her opportunities
- 22 Change can be good for you
- 24 For her it's not business as usual
- 26 Sandra spreads her wings Down Under
- 28 Sandile is captain of the HR ship

Articles

- 29 Alumni reunite in Molen Kórus
- 30 Hard work and progress go hand in hand here
- 32 The NWU gift that keeps on giving
- 34 Industry crowns NWU graphic design talent
- 37 Following in Fossey's footsteps

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Staff from Institutional Advancement and communication officers on the campuses.

LANGUAGE EDITING:

Clairwyn van der Merwe.

LAYOUT:

Studio Chatnoir: Mercia Venter.

PRINTING:

Ivyline Technologies.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

NWU colleagues and service providers.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES/

CORRESPONDENCE:

Nelia Engelbrecht - Tel 018 299 4937,
fax 086 614 3222.

The NWU & U is produced and published in English and Afrikaans by the Institutional Advancement Department of the NWU. It is distributed mainly in electronic format, except where we do not have valid email addresses for alumni.



Message from the vice-chancellor

Dear alumni

It is a pleasure to write to you in my capacity as vice-chancellor. Alumni of the North-West University represent an important stakeholder group and we value your support.

Dr Theuns Eloff stepped down as vice-chancellor at the end of March this year. We thank him warmly for his significant contribution to the university and in particular his leadership during the merger which created the NWU some 10 years ago. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

Significant challenges face the university and I wish to share some of these with you.

A challenge which emerged at the beginning of this year was the issue of initiation practices during the orientation of students. It was alleged that abuses of human rights occurred during the welcoming and introduction programme on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Disciplinary action was instituted where appropriate. In late February, images of alleged Nazi-style salutes were published in the media and the Minister of Higher Education and Training requested a report from the NWU Council on the matter. Council appointed a task team to investigate this issue. By the time you read this, we probably would have received a report, with the expectation of clear advice on how to take this matter forward.

My views are on record that I will have zero tolerance for any practices that infringe the human rights of our students and any initiation practices that cause trauma to students will not be tolerated.

Last year, under the leadership of Dr Theuns Eloff, the institutional management commissioned an international panel to evaluate the first 10 years of the merger, to establish to what extent the vision and mission of the university had been achieved.

The report was released recently and has been noted by Council and management. It is currently under consideration and will form an element

in the development of a new strategic agenda for the university.

It should be emphasised that Council and management have taken no firm views on the report and that important stakeholder groups such as alumni will be consulted when a strategic agenda for the university is developed.

Comment and input from alumni on this or any other issues will be most welcome. The report may be accessed on the NWU website under Press Releases. Any comments can be sent to Mr Louis Jacobs, institutional director for corporate communication and stakeholder relations at: louis.jacobs@nwu.ac.za.

One area in which the university has made significant progress is in the area of research.

Research output, particularly the number of publications in accredited journals, has increased on all campuses and especially on the Mafikeng Campus, whose achievements are highlighted in this issue.

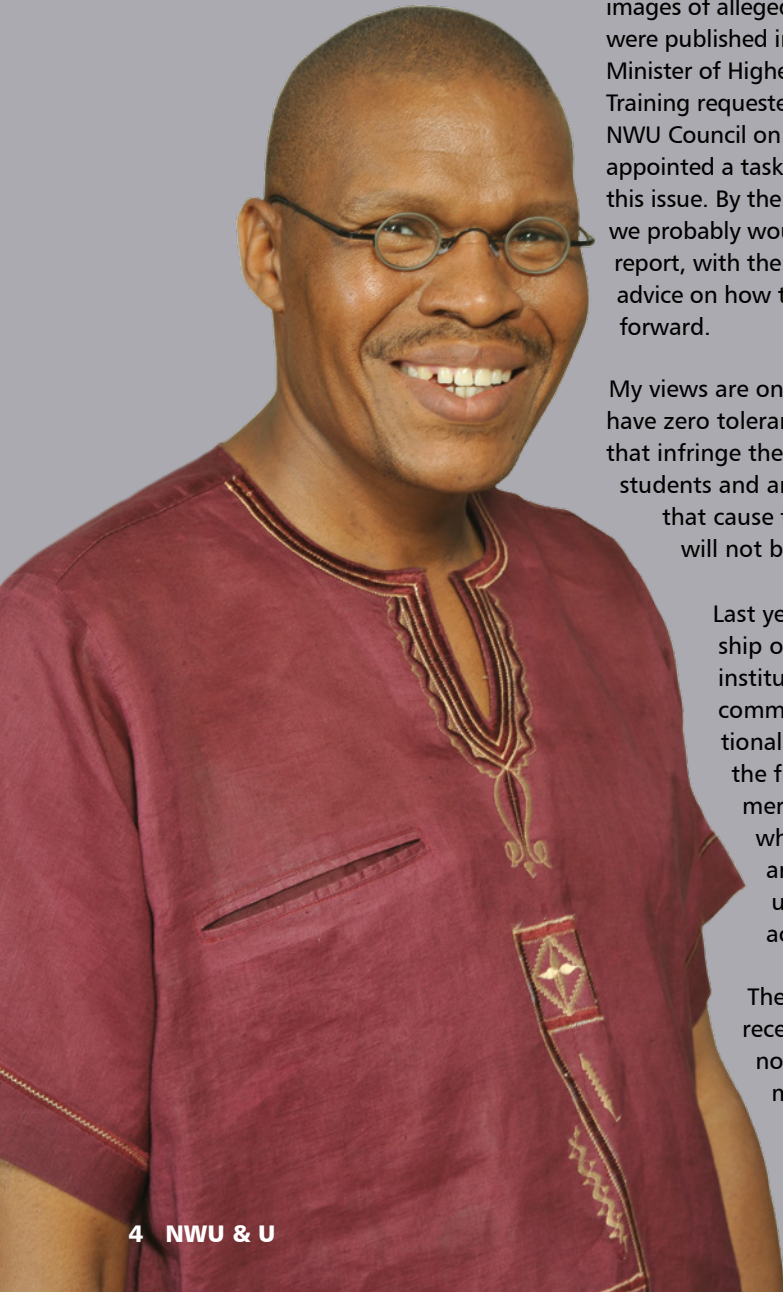
Innovation has always been emphasised at the NWU and our technology transfer and patent applications and grants place us amongst the top four South African universities.

We continue, in difficult economic times, to be stable financially and the NWU will continue to ensure financial sustainability in the challenging times ahead.

I look forward to engaging with you in the years ahead and hope that together we can take the NWU to new heights.

Kind regards,

Dan Hgwadi



Change brings challenges

and possibilities

It can be very tempting to stay in your comfort zone and watch life go by; the reassuring sameness makes you feel safe somehow.

However, according to alumni Sonja Veiga (article on p 22) and Matlakala Matthews (p 24), growth requires change. Doing business as usual may not be the way to tackle fresh challenges.

At the NWU, 2014 has brought many changes. Apart from the fact that Prof Dan Kgwadi has succeeded Dr Theuns Eloff as vice-chancellor, the NWU also has a new vice-principal and institutional registrar, and the Mafikeng Campus has a new rector (article on p 8).

Such changes require adaptability and a willingness to leave your comfort zone. On p 9, in the article on Prof Dan, he says that he understands people's fear of change. He also says that there is a lot at the NWU that must be preserved and also other, new things that should be ventured.

The things that remain unchanged often serve as the starting point for reaching new heights. Lessons learnt from the past should not be forgotten on the road to change.

On the letters page (p 6) Ms Miriam Coetzee tells us about her family's 109-year history with the Potchefstroom Campus, previously the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education – a precious legacy indeed.

However, sometimes things that seemed to work in the past become obsolete. This was the case with the alleged initiation or hazing practices at the NWU reported in the media earlier this year. At the request of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, an independent task team was appointed to investigate these allegations.

At the time of going to press the task team's investigation had been completed but the results had not yet been published. Time will tell whether there are practices or traditions that need to make way for growth and change.

This report – and the report of the international panel evaluated by the NWU at the beginning of the year (article on p 7) – will help to determine the NWU's future strategy.

Meanwhile we trust that the year to date has been successful for you, our alumni, wherever you are. May the second half of 2014 be without major stumbling blocks and may the potential changes lead to unprecedented success for all.

Happy reading,

Nelia

and the NWU & U team



NWU experts know their stuff

The NWU's experts are often quoted in the media, which enhances the public image of the university as an institution that pursues knowledge and innovation in order to enable others to improve their quality of life. In this article we share some of our experts' comments that were published in the media.



“Mining companies should be held responsible and do more to support social and economic development of communities living near mining operations. They must uphold human rights, community needs and social responsibility. Many communities are living in pain because of their (mining companies') lack of accountability.”

Prof Victor Okakorotu,
School of Human Sciences,
Mafikeng Campus

“Unemployment, poverty and inequality serious concern: Premier”, *The New Age*, 31 March 2014.



“The decision during the Oscar Pistorius trial that the media could basically broadcast an entire murder trial is a breakthrough. The conditions and limitations that were set, for instance that witnesses can choose not to appear on camera, that radio may use continuous feed and that picture taking may not interfere with the trial, are very reasonable. These concessions can mean a lot for future media coverage.”

Prof Johannes Froneman,
School of Communication Studies,
Potchefstroom Campus

“Mediadekking van Oscar Pistorius-moordsaak 'n eerste vir Suid-Afrika”, *Klank Koerant* – *Radio Pretoria*, 28 February 2014.

Messages from afar

Ms Miriam Coetzee's family boasts a close, 109-year-long association with the Potchefstroom Campus and its predecessor, the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE).



Here is her story:

Dear readers,

I am a through-and-through Potchefstroomer – I have lived here for 83 years.

When I was a child, Noordbrug – the university area where I now live – was actually quite far from the centre of town. In those days many people had cows that grazed at the Potchefstroom Dam during the day and were taken back home in the afternoons.



Ms Miriam Coetzee's family have made their mark on the Potchefstroom Campus. The portrait behind her is of her father, Prof Joon van Rooy. The edition of *Die Kerkbode* Miriam is holding, features her grandfather, Prof Jan Lion-Cachet, on the front cover. (This is a magazine published by the Reformed Church.)

By five o'clock, when the students were also on their way home, it was often difficult to navigate your way past all the cows in Tom Street.

But stretching back even further than my own association with Potchefstroom is my family's association with the Potchefstroom Campus and the former PU for CHE, or PUK, as it was known.

My grandfather was Prof Jan Lion-Cachet. During his career, he was rector of the old Theological School in Burgersdorp and later rector of the Theological School of the PU for CHE (1904 to 1912).

My father was Prof Joon van Rooy, who started his studies in theology in 1909. He served as registrar, lecturer, professor, dean, rector and chancellor before his death in 1954. The administration building on campus was named after him.

By the way, the original Cachet was a Dutch Jew whose family converted to Christianity when he was still a child, and the original Van Rooy was a Belgian Roman-Catholic who was run out of the country by his family when he became a Protestant.

My sister, Martha van Rooy, studied library science from 1946 to 1948. She worked at the Ferdinand Postma Library and later at the Conservatory's library, for a total of 44 years.

My husband Hendrik and I both arrived on campus as first years in 1949 – the year the library burnt down. I obtained an honours degree in psychology in 1952 and my husband obtained his MCom in 1953. Hendrik was an accountant on cam-

Please write and tell us where you are in the world and how your careers are progressing, or just write about anything that is close to your heart. Email letters to nelia.engelbrecht@nwu.ac.za, fax them to 086 614 3222 or mail them to Nelia Engelbrecht, Institutional Office, North-West University, Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom, 2520.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

pus and later became the director for finance – first at the PU for CHE, and then at the Vaal Triangle Campus, which was a satellite campus of the PU for CHE at the time. He worked with Prof Tom van Dyk, the first rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus.

Two of my daughters, Lettie and Ester Coetzee, also studied here – town and regional planning from 1978 to 1981 (Lettie), and personnel management from 1989 to 1992 (Ester).

My grandson, Dries Coetzee, obtained a BComHons degree in 2005, and another grandson, Armand Aucamp, is currently a third-year graphic design student on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Few of my contemporaries remain – when we had our 50-year reunion in 1999, there were only 11 of us.

But I enjoy reading the news about the NWU in the alumni magazine...

Kind regards,
Miriam Coetzee,
Potchefstroom

International panel praises AND cautions NWU

The NWU should pay attention to student access and social integration, the equity profiles of academic and senior administrative staff and the language policy.

These are some of the main findings of a report that the NWU Council received during their workshop on 15 April.

The report is the result of the evaluation of the NWU by an international panel at the beginning of 2014. The seven-member panel undertook the evaluation at the invitation of the NWU and presented their report in April.

The panel was commissioned to evaluate two matters of importance to the NWU. The first was the extent to which the university has accomplished the initial merger objectives, and the second the extent to which the NWU's mission elements has been achieved.

THE FOCUS OF THE REPORT

The report focuses mainly on teaching-learning, research, implementation of expertise, human capital, transformation, finance and infrastructure.

The NWU was praised for its research capacity and expertise in technology transfer, and for promoting local and regional development and community engagement. The executive management was also praised for the financial management of the institution and for its resulting financial stability.



ADDRESS THESE MATTERS

Some of the recommendations in the report are that the university should develop policies for recruiting and retaining staff in areas where significant racial and gender imbalances exist, and should develop incentives to encourage greater staff mobility across campuses.

The NWU also needs to ensure that teaching-learning activities are given the same prominence as research. This applies to both staff rewards and workload allocations. Existing efforts to align academic programmes across the three campuses should be reinforced.

Furthermore, the NWU should review its present model of governance and management to enable it to develop an integrated NWU culture and identity, and to strengthen steering capacity across the institution.

IMPORTANT MILESTONE

"The commissioning of this international evaluation and the receipt of its findings and recommendations represent a significant milestone for the NWU," says Prof Dan Kgwadi, vice-chancellor.

"The institutional management is committed to embracing the challenges identified in the report, and will develop a strategic action plan for approval by Council."

The panel's report was made available to the public and the NWU community after the Council meeting on 15 April. Staff members will be invited to make inputs through existing structures. ▶

◀ The full report is available here.

New leaders take the helm

During the past few months, the NWU Council made four high-level appointments at the university. The positions that were filled were those of vice-chancellor, vice-principal, institutional registrar and rector of the Mafikeng Campus.

Prof Dan Kgwadi, former rector of the Mafikeng Campus, assumed his duties on 1 April 2014, for a term of six years.

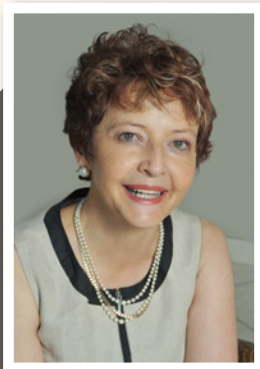
He succeeds Dr Theuns Eloff, who served two five-year terms as vice-chancellor following the establishment of the NWU in 2004.

Prof Dan's appointment comes after the NWU Council had to choose between two outstanding candidates at the end of 2013: Prof Dan and Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, the current rector of the Potchefstroom Campus.

In light of their excellent campus achievements over the years, Council decided to re-

tain both candidates' expertise by appointing Prof Dan as vice-chancellor and Prof Herman as vice-principal.

The other two high-level appointments made by Council are those of Prof Marlene Verhoef as institutional registrar and Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele as rector of the Mafikeng Campus.



STRATEGIST BECOMES REGISTRAR

Apart from appointing the vice-chancellor and the vice-principal, Council also appointed Prof Marlene Verhoef as the new institutional registrar.

Prof Marlene's six-year term started on 1 January 2014.

Before this appointment she was the executive advisor for strategies and projects in the office of the vice-chancellor. Prof Marlene is a well-known language specialist and serves on the PanSALB Language Tribunal.

She succeeds Prof Themba Mosia who accepted a position at the University of Pretoria. ▶



FORWARD TOGETHER

In accordance with the University Statute, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, the new vice-principal, will act as vice-chancellor whenever Prof Dan is out of town.

The Statute also stipulates that the vice-principal is responsible for certain managerial, administrative and supervisory duties that may be assigned to him by the vice-chancellor.

Prof Herman will remain rector of the Potchefstroom Campus. The Council decided to extend his term as rector for a term matching that of the vice-chancellor.

He is a well-known academic and prominent agricultural economist who has distinguished himself in several fields.

His involvement in provincial and national institutions is highly acclaimed. He was a member of the National Agricultural Marketing Council and was deputy chairperson of the Board of the Land Bank. ▶

From small beginnings comes greatness for Dan Kgwadi

Prof Dan Kgwadi likes to try out new things and is never biased.

These were the words of Ofentse, the 16-year-old daughter of Prof Dan and his wife Mabel, when, the day before his interview for the position of vice-chancellor, Prof Dan asked her advice on what she thought his positive qualities are.

These qualities stand him in good stead as vice-chancellor of the North-West University from 1 April 2014.

NEW THINGS WELCOME

Firstly, it is good that he likes new things, because there are plenty of those. For instance, prior to his appointment, he was the rector and “father” of only one campus, Mafikeng, but now that he has been appointed as vice-chancellor, he is the father of many.

The role of father comes naturally to him – after all, his second name is Ntate, which means “father”.

He and his younger siblings had to cope without a father in the house, and he became the “man of the house” when he himself was still just a boy.

EDUCATION IS THE BEST DEFENCE

First, in his place of birth, Kraaipan, and later in Taung, both in the North West Province, his late mother, Meisie, encouraged him from a young age to study.

Meisie’s bright child did not disappoint. He was head boy of his school and received bursaries for further study.

At the former University of Bophuthatswana he could pursue his love for physics and before long he obtained the first of four degrees.

After his undergraduate studies, he obtained his master’s degree in physics from Ball State University in the United States.

After receiving his PhD in physics from the PU for CHE, he obtained his second master’s degree, this time in environmental law and management, from the University of the North (Turfloop).

At the time of his appointment as campus rector, he was registered with the NWU for his MBA. However, he put these studies on hold to avoid a conflict of interest in having to sign his own certificate.

In 2010, Prof Dan received an honorary doctorate from Hanseo University in Korea.

A PLACE IN THE SUN FOR EVERYONE

The second characteristic that impressed Ofentse – that her father is not biased – is definitely also a big plus.

“We may have different religions, cultures and races, but we are all South Africans,” says Prof Dan.

Unity in diversity is very important to him. “The university makes provision for other belief systems for diversity. However, I am a Christian in my heart – it is my religious home.”

DON’T FEAR CHANGE

Prof Dan is sensitive to people’s fear of change, especially surrounding the university’s language policy which states that Afrikaans is the primary language of instruction on the Potchefstroom Campus.

“Afrikaans is the only indigenous language in this country that functions on an academic level; this can serve as an example for other indigenous languages. I plan to learn the language myself. By the end of my term I will be able to speak it much better than now.”

His position about Afrikaans is also balanced by his conviction for access and diversity of our campuses. Transformation is important to him and he is committed to its acceleration. He acknowledges the progress made over the past 10 years.

“There is a lot that needs to be preserved at the NWU and also other, new things to try out to take the institution to another level.”

It remains Prof Dan’s passion to empower young people, particularly those from less privileged circumstances. This is so because Prof Dan has experienced the steep road from Kraaipan, past Taung to university studies, an honorary doctorate and now... vice-chancellor of the NWU. ▀

Acknowledgement: *Rapport, Beeld, New Age*



Mafikeng Campus boasts dynamic new rector



Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele, new rector of the NWU's Mafikeng Campus, believes that given half a chance, we are all capable of doing so much more than we realise.

"Being rural and poor does not mean that one is mentally challenged. It only means that one needs to work 10 times harder to achieve, as a result of resources that are very limited and highly contested. I believe that your destiny is not defined by who you are or where you come from but by commitment, hard work and passion in whatever you do."

It is with this message of determination to succeed that Prof Mashudu took over the reins from Prof Dan Kgwadi on 1 April 2014 and became the first female rector of the Mafikeng Campus since the merger in 2004.

Prof Mashudu is no stranger to the campus. Prior to her appointment as vice-rector in 2012, she was the dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology.

STRIVING FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

During her term as vice-rector and dean she played a pivotal role in taking research to an all-time high. Under her leadership the publication output increased from 36,15 in 2009 to 302,66 units in 2013.

Prof Mashudu's career reveals a deep commitment to academic excellence, community service and partnerships with the public sector and industry.

Holding office as rector for a term of six years, Prof Mashudu plans to take the Mafikeng Campus to new heights.

"The Mafikeng Campus has so much potential for growth. My role will only be to support the campus to grow and achieve its maximum potential. Our rural context cannot be seen as a disadvantage but as an opportunity to contribute towards growth and development of the province and the country at large."

The Mafikeng Campus has indeed grown and excelled against all odds and with Prof Mashudu at the helm, there is surely much more to come. ▶



CLIMBING THE LADDER TO SUCCESS

Prof Mashudu's academic record includes a BACur (Nursing), Hons (BACur), MA in nursing education and a doctorate in psycho-educational programme development.

Several of her publications have appeared in various national and international scientific journals and numerous research and project reports have come from her pen.

She was awarded a scholarship through Fogarty Funding to pursue her postdoctoral studies at the University of California in Los Angeles in the USA in collaboration with the University of Limpopo. She focused on trauma research with special emphasis on gender-based violence.

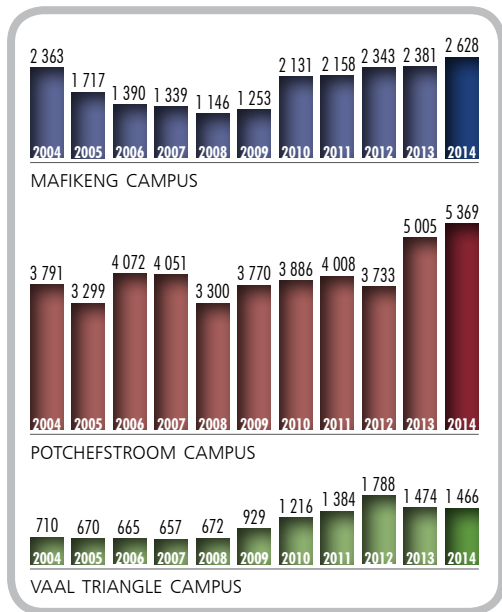
She also did a postgraduate diploma at the International Research Ethics Network for Southern Africa at the University of Cape Town.

Prof Mashudu's research is about sexual and reproductive health issues, focusing on trauma related to sexual and gender-based violence.

She serves on numerous professional bodies including the South African Nursing Council. Among many accolades, she has received the Hall of Fame award for research excellence in nursing from the Forum of University Deans of South Africa.

Prof Mashudu is also the editor in chief of *Curationis*, the official journal of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa. ▶

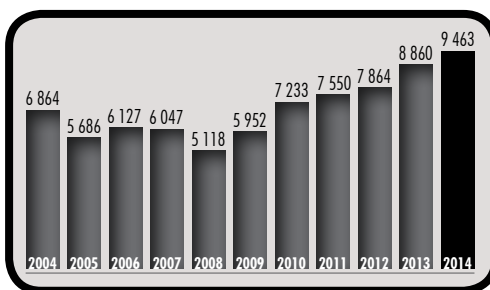
First years welcomed with NWU hospitality



This is how the number of first years increased on the campuses.

Of the 9 463 students who made the NWU their home in 2014, some 2 638 embarked on this new chapter of their lives at the Mafikeng Campus, 5 369 at the Potchefstroom Campus and 1 466 at the Vaal Triangle Campus.

When the NWU was established in 2004, there were a total of 6 864 first-year students. This number has grown by about 38% in the past decade. (See graph below.)



* The figures for 2013 and 2014 are not final.

A bright future started at the NWU for 9 463 young people when they registered as first years at the beginning of 2014.

Hello, first years!

At the reception of the first years and their parents on 9 January (Vaal Triangle Campus), 11 January (Potchefstroom Campus) and 1 February (Mafikeng Campus), the campus rectors welcomed the newcomers.

PROF DAN KGWADI
FORMER RECTOR OF THE MAFIKENG CAMPUS



“The campus has zero tolerance when it comes to violence, and the safety of every single student on campus is a priority to us.

Our campus accepts all cultures, races and religions. Furthermore, to us, being ‘less abled’ doesn’t mean you are disabled.”

PROF HERMAN VAN SCHALKWYK
RECTOR OF THE POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS



“You represent a milestone in the history of the country and the campus. You are a new generation, the so-called ‘born free’ students born after 1994.

You should embark on this new chapter of your life with enthusiasm.”

PROF THANYANI MARIBA
RECTOR OF THE VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS



“You are the ‘cream of the crop.’ You must make the most of this post-school opportunity by studying diligently and obtaining your qualifications in due course so that you can make way for the next generation.”

Alumni celebrate in 2014

In 2014 the NWU celebrates its tenth anniversary. During the first half of the year, alumni gathered from near and far to toast the university and enjoy each other's company. We gladly share these festive events with our readers.

Swaziland alumni brave bad weather

Swaziland is prone to extreme weather conditions and in February 2014 alumni of the Mafikeng Campus were met with flooded roads while on their way to a reunion in this small kingdom.

Despite the bad weather and closed roads, a small group of alumni met with staff from the Mafikeng Campus's alumni office at the Lugogo Sun in the Izulweni valley on 25 February.

"The alumni were very excited when shown a video and all agreed that the progress made by the campus is impressive," says Ms Susan van Rooyen, alumni coordinator on that campus.

During the meeting, they discussed the fact that not many NWU alumni were employed in Swaziland and that very little is known about the university in that country.

Alumni suggested that information about the NWU's achievements should be shared with the media in Swaziland.



Ms Susan van Rooyen, alumni coordinator, and Mr Sefiso Simelane share a pleasant moment during the reunion in Swaziland.

One of the alumni, Mr Sefiso Nimrod Simelane, a member of the Campus Student Council in 2008, shared his memories about his student years on the Mafikeng Campus.

As an international student on campus, he first stayed in the James Moroko residence and later in the Lost City residence while studying for a degree in conservation, tourism and sustainable development.

"Although alumni such as Sefiso are not yet permanently employed, they are still very positive about the NWU and are encouraging their family members to study at the Mafikeng Campus," says Susan. ▸

Vaal's business breakfast focuses on change



Mr Theo Vorster was the guest speaker at a business breakfast for alumni of the Vaal Triangle Campus.



Alumni wind down among the vineyards. At the back are Jacobus Kriel, Gerda Kriel, Pieter Bingle, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk (rector of the Potchefstroom Campus), Adele Croucamp, Anton Janse van Rensburg, Reinder Kingma and Juanli Theron. In front are Reynold Fourie, Egbert Meyer and Retief Scheepers.

Jollification in the Boland

The Potchefstroom alumni office has been celebrating 2014 with activities to suit every palate – from beer tasting to golf and a visit to the vineyards.

On 25 January, about 80 alumni took up their clubs for the annual alumni golf club championships at the Potchefstroom country club.

Not long afterwards, on 12 February, the wine guild exchanged their wine glasses for beer mugs when they held a beer tasting in Potchefstroom.

APRIL FUN

In April, it was the turn of Cape alumni and those who had formed part of the Alabama Student Musical Company.

On 9 April, approximately 180 alumni came together at the Webersburg Wine Estate, not far from Stellenbosch. On 25 April, there was

great excitement when 25 former members of Alabama (between 1977 and 1979) visited the Potchefstroom Campus.

REST OF THE YEAR

Wag-'n-Bietjie, Wanda, Hombré, Excelsior, Karlien and Bellatrix residences are all holding reunions this year. Alumni will also assemble in Windhoek, the Eastern Free State, Port Elizabeth and Upington.

Former students who registered at the then Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the Potchefstroom College of Education in 1964 are holding their reunion on 24 November 2014 on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Those who are interested can contact the alumni office at 018 299 2768 or yolandi.haasbroek@nwu.ac.za.

Change is inevitable, yet in the midst of business hustle and bustle too many leaders still try to shy away from it.

This is according to Mr Theo Vorster, chief executive officer of Galileo Capital and the keynote speaker during the Vaal Triangle Campus's first alumni breakfast forum for the year.

"The best kind of change comes when you envision, initiate and control it," says Theo. During the course of the morning, he shared several home-grown business success stories with the audience. Some of these stories were

those of business giants such as Koos Bekker, former chief executive officer of Naspers, and Herman Mashaba, founder of the company Black Like Me.

According to Ms Alwine Naudé, alumni coordinator at the campus, the breakfast forums are a valuable platform for industry leaders, academics and business professionals to debate issues that affect them and build new networks.

Alwine says the gala event for alumni will take place on 30 October, with the NWU's 10-year celebrations as the theme.



Prof Ché Weldon and Ms Esté Matthew with Jessie, the young sheep dog who sniffs out bullfrogs that live underground.

Sheep dog sniffs out bullfrogs

A young sheep dog is being trained to sniff out the Giant Bullfrog as part of the research of a master's student at the Potchefstroom Campus.

Six-month-old Jessie recently started her training to sniff out these frogs under the ground.

Jessie's owner, Ms Esté Matthew, came up with the idea and after a conversation with her supervisor, Prof Ché Weldon, they developed a programme in which Jessie could help with Esté's study in zoology.

The Giant Bullfrog is currently a protected species in Gauteng because its habitat is gradually shrinking due to urbanisation. The African Bullfrog hibernates underground for up to 11 months of the year and is above ground for only about a month to breed, if it has rained sufficiently. This makes it very difficult to find them during the rest of the year.

Jessie comes from two working parents on a sheep farm near Bloemfontein. During her training, Jessie first learnt to sniff out biltong, then a tea mixture that was gradually diluted, and then frog skin.

Esté says Jessie can already sniff out one to 100 000th of the smell in a box under the ground. ▶

Student wins national FameLab Competition

Mr Raven Motsewabangwe, a student from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology on the Mafikeng Campus, was recently crowned the overall winner in the national FameLab Competition.

This competition was held during the National Science Festival (Scifest) in Grahamstown on 14 March 2014. Raven, studying for an honours degree in Microbiology, competed against 18 other students from seven regions in South Africa.

FameLab is an international competition. It nurtures engagement between science and society by creating spaces for young people to talk about science, technology, engineering and mathematics. During the competition, the contestants had three minutes to engage the judges and a live audience.

Raven, together with Ms Kgomotso Mohatalle, represented the campus at the Scifest after winning the regional FameLab Competition held at the Science Centre on campus on 13 February 2014.

His topic for the FameLab competition was: "Viral infection and its causes and how to prevent them". ▶

Master's degree in risk management launched

The UARM Centre for Applied Risk Management on the Vaal Triangle Campus has launched their new master's degree in banking and financial risk management.

This new master's programme, one of only a few known to be offered worldwide, has an applied qualitative risk focus, whereas most other postgraduate risk programmes focus on the quantitative aspects of risk.

A group of 12 students attended the first contact session for the programme from 6 to 8 March 2014 at the UARM venue located at the Quest Conference Estate in Vanderbijlpark.

This master's degree is a part-time programme running over two years with regular contact sessions.

To be considered for the programme, applicants must have an honours degree with at least two years of work experience, and currently hold a risk-related position. Applications for enrolment in 2015 will open in June.

For more information, send an email to Mr Henry Cockeran at: henry.cockeran@nwu.ac.za. ▶



Prof Hermien Zaaiman from the School of Economic Sciences leads the team that launched the new masters degree.



Mr David Habana from Absa talks to first-year students about financial planning.

First-year students become money-savvy

The Vaal Triangle Campus has joined hands with South Africa's largest consumer bank, Absa, to teach its first-year students how to handle their finances. This was part of a project called the "Absa Empower Hour".

This initiative, coordinated jointly by the campus's School of Behavioural Sciences and the Centre for Continuous Professional Development, was run during the reception programme for first years.

Dr Elrie Botha, director of the School of Behavioural Sciences, says first-year students experience new-found freedom, including with their finances. "This initiative assists students to manage that freedom responsibly and understand the bigger picture pertaining to their long-term financial well-being."

Talks are currently underway to see how the training could be rolled out to the campus's senior students, as well as to the other campuses of the NWU. ▽

Science Centre manager attends world summit

The Science Centre manager, Ms Lerato Molebatsi, attended the Science Centre World Summit 2014 held at the Technopolis Science Centre in Mechelen, Belgium from 17 to 19 March 2014.

At the summit, delegates discussed issues based on three main themes, namely research and communication, engaging learners in all settings and new technologies for learning engagement.

"The 2014 summit brought together CEOs, managers, decision makers and experts from within and beyond the science centre field to explore the global challenges and to focus on long-term strategic issues," says Lerato.

At this summit, 443 leaders of science centres and museums from 58 countries put forward the Mechelen Declaration. This is a commitment to take action to enhance public engagement for a better world.

The summit was also attended by His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium who was the first to sign the declaration. ▽

Legal rhino horn hold great benefits

Communities in South Africa can benefit from the implementation of legalised trade in rhino horn.

This is the opinion of Mr Michael Murphree, a researcher at the African Centre for Disaster Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus.

He believes that the South African government's viewpoint of establishing limited trade in white rhino horn is a huge economic opportunity.

"Legalised trade in rhino horn will not only significantly improve these communities' quality of life, but will also lessen the pressure on the government to combat illegal poaching," he says.

His suggestion is that communities that have instituted successful land claims,



The Science Centre manager, Ms Lerato Molebatsi, joins experts from across the world in the field of communication and science education at the Science Centre World Summit 2014.

or have land at their disposal, should be given the opportunity to participate in a rhino farming project.

Currently the market value of rhino horn is between R200 000 and R300 000 per kilogram. Considering that these animals' life expectancy is between 35 and 50 years, one rhino can generate millions of Rands in income over its lifespan.

"When a rhino is dehorned in a responsible manner, the horn grows back to its original length within two years," he says. ▽

WE CELEBRATE



OF GROWTH

2004 - 2014

This year the NWU celebrates its tenth anniversary with a special campaign, "To the power of 10", which involves stakeholder groups such as alumni, donors, staff and students.

Some of the events take place on the campuses, while others will harness the national media to reach stakeholders outside the university.

"The ten-year celebrations offer an ideal opportunity to boast about the university's achievements," says Mr Louis Jacobs, director for corporate communication and stakeholder relations in the Institutional Office.

Prof Dan Kgwadi, the vice-chancellor, agrees: "Everything started on 1 January 2004, but

today, 10 years later, the NWU is still developing. Progress requires continuous growth, because the pursuit of greatness is an ongoing process.

"On the threshold of the second decade we're still saying: It all starts here." ▶

EDUCATION SCIENCES

Number of distance students who completed their studies



= 178,8% GROWTH

This is how the NWU grows and excels

2004 to 2013

66,6%

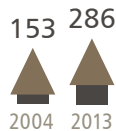
INCREASE in
RSA-patented
inventions



= 129,3% GROWTH

in total
research output

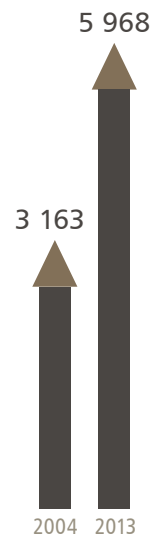
CONTRIBUTION TO SA LABOUR FORCE



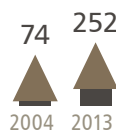
NURSES



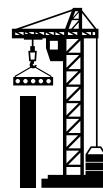
ACCOUNTANTS



FURTHER
TRAINING
FOR TEACHERS



ATTORNEYS



ENGINEERS

The figures for 2013 are not final.

How effective is education in South Africa?

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world, said the late former president Mr Nelson Mandela.

NWU & U spoke to two education experts at the NWU about the state of education in South Africa and asked them if they think that learners who pass their matric exams are ready for the world of work or for tertiary education.

The experts are Prof Robert Balfour, dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus, and Prof Elsa Fourie, director of the School for Education Sciences on the Vaal Triangle Campus.



What is your opinion about education in South Africa in light of the recent matric results?

Elsa

I am not convinced that the matric results are a true reflection of the state of education in South Africa.

Although the minister of Basic Education announced that 78,2% of the 2013 learners passed matric, no mention is made of the real problem, namely large numbers of learners who drop out along the way and never take the matric exam.

A total of 1,2 million learners enrolled for grade one in 2001. Only 44% of these learners registered for the National Senior Certificate exam in 2012 and only 12% qualified for admission to a university.

To pass matric, learners only need to achieve 30% in three subjects and 40% in another three. Pass requirements therefore need an overhaul.

A large portion of the national budget is spent on education, but South Africa does very poorly compared to most other countries.

The index of 2012-2013 indicates that South Africa's education system ranks 140th out of 144 countries on the list. This is a clear indication that funds are allocated ineffectively and thus do not support and advance effective teaching and learning.

Robert

While it can be claimed that student throughput rates and pass rates have improved year on year, the real issue is the credibility of the education curriculum.

It is clear that university readiness is a huge and under-recognised problem with the schooling curriculum in South Africa.

The data to support this can be seen in the weak throughput and retention rates in universities. More students have in the past 10 years qualified to access higher education, but fewer students (%) are getting through on time. This implies that the schooling system does not yield graduate-ready students.

This has nothing to do with the pass rates, and everything to do with the quality of teaching and the knowledge-readiness of learners. Simply put, learners know too little and the curriculum does not extend the learners enough.

The problem is made more complex in the context of teacher education programmes. We need certainty that these programmes develop suitable intellectual confidence and flexibility in relation to teachers' subject-content knowledge.

It is still too soon, given the relative newness of teacher qualifications since 1994, to know whether a new generation of teachers is making a substantive difference in the system.

Do you think the matriculants are ready to enter the labour market or (those with university exemption) start university studies?

Elsa

Considering the large numbers of learners who drop out, the percentage of learners who never take the matric exam and the learners who do not meet the universities' admission requirements, I do not think their knowledge and skills are adequate for entering the labour market.

Despite continual efforts to admit more students to universities, universities take on an increasing responsibility in terms of throughput of these students.

Poor academic preparation in schools leads to poor performance of university students. As a large percentage of students drop out or fail to complete their qualifications in the designated minimum time, universities need to develop bridging programmes or extended programmes to support these students. It is thus clear that many learners are not ready for university studies.

Robert

The debates about changing the pass marks belie two critical factors.

The first has to do with the level of knowledge required of learners and the development of synthesis and analytical skills.

There is no certainty about the adequacy of the existing curriculum either in terms of preparing learners for the world of work, or for the world of higher education studies.

The second factor has to do with the quality of teachers in the system.

It is clear that the knowledge upgrade anticipated by the Advanced Certificate in Education and the National Professional Diploma in Education for unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the system did not fulfil its promise. This is because the Department of Basic Education previously did not insist that teachers focus on enriching their subject-content knowledge.

What do you consider to be the two most important solutions for the current education situation in SA?

Elsa

School management and support by district offices require urgent attention. Many district offices have staff shortages and in some cases the staff members lack the necessary knowledge and skills to offer support.

The quality of teaching and learning in classrooms needs to improve. Knowledge and technology, among others, develop incredibly fast. Teachers should continually attend in-service training in order to keep up to date with these developments.

It is also essential that learners' thinking skills and attitudes be improved by skilled teachers, as this will lead to better quality teaching and learning in the classroom.

Robert

As mentioned earlier, the Department of Basic Education is now requiring teachers to specialise in the knowledge areas associated with their disciplines.

The other issue – the extent to which we have really ascertained whether we are challenging students enough in the course of their learning – remains under-explored.

In relation to this last issue, the link between schooling and higher education expectations and requirements needs to be more carefully explored between basic and higher education, and then between higher education and the private sector.

DR MOLALE GIVES HIS OPINION

Dr Itumeleng Molale, alumnus of the Mafikeng Campus (article on p 20), and head of department at the Department of Education in the North West Province, gives his opinion.

What do you think about secondary education in South Africa in the light of last year's matric results?

Secondary education in South Africa still has to go a long way. And this opinion is informed by a very weak primary education system.

Do you think matriculants who pass their grade 12 exams are ready to face the world of work, and do you think that those with university exemption are ready for tertiary studies?

No. In South Africa, matric is about completing the schooling phase. This has nothing to do with readiness for work or university education.

What, in your opinion, may be the two most important challenges faced by the Department of Basic Education (in particular with reference to secondary education and matriculants)?

Two challenges are uppermost in my mind, namely poor school leadership and poor teacher competency.

The Department of Basic Education uses a series of tests, known as the Annual National Assessments, to assess the knowledge of all learners from grade one to six, as well as learners in grade nine.

The subjects in which their knowledge is measured are their home language, first additional language and mathematics.

According to the 2013 results that the department published earlier this year, the average percentage for grade nine learners was 43% for the first language, 33% for the first additional language and 14% for mathematics. Approximately 2% of learners received 50% and more for mathematics. ▀

Education

is his passion

For Dr Itumeleng Molale, alumnus of the Mafikeng Campus, it is very important to stand boldly for something you believe in and for him, quality education is definitely such a matter.



Dr Itumeleng Molale is the head of department at the North West Education Department.

There is a saying that a new broom sweeps clean and in the case of the newly appointed head of department at the North West Department of Education, it might just be true.

After 18 months as acting head of department, Dr Itumeleng Molale's position was made permanent in December 2013.

According to him, the curriculum is fundamentally sound but there should be more focus on teacher training and the appointment of competent school leaders.

The North West Education Department has been in the news for all the wrong reasons in recent years. While conceding that there has been discontinuity at leadership level in recent times, he believes this has changed for the better. "I foresee a future where I become part of a team which makes a humble and honest contribution to sustained quality service delivery in education," says Itumeleng.

HIGHLY ACCLAIMED

Itumeleng is described as a person with an iron will to achieve his objectives. So says Prof Jonathan Jansen, who supervised him during his PhD studies. He goes on to say that Itumeleng is a "natural leader, visionary and strategist".

"There are only a few leaders with this deep commitment to the service of education," says Prof Jansen, vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State.

Itumeleng did his higher education studies part time, obtaining BAED, Bed and MEd degrees at the NWU's Mafikeng Campus.

A scholarship by the National Research Foundation plus a bursary saw him through his doctoral degree in 2004.

TASK ORIENTATED

Itumeleng currently serves as the deputy chairperson of the North West Research Coordinating Committee appointed by the premier of the province.

He is also chairperson of the premier's task team between government and the NWU,

and chairperson of the quality of learning and teaching campaign to mobilise communities to support schools.

"As chairperson of the task team between government and the NWU, the main goal is to ensure that both sectors contribute jointly in making government programmes and policies realise the desired impact. These desired outcomes can be achieved if sufficient intellectual scrutiny is shared by the NWU and if government heeds the advice," he says.

The quality of the learning and teaching campaign is close to his heart and he has been acknowledged for driving the programme with passion and commitment.

"Empirical evidence suggests that despite the massive financial injection in the education system over the last 20 years, the achievement of quality education has been very elusive. My role is to make provision of quality education a societal matter," he says, indicating that education is something that affects every citizen in one way or another.

GIFT TO MANKIND

In his private capacity, Itumeleng was a manager of Mosipidi Management Publishing and has written a book, titled *The Politics of Policy Implementation*. He is currently writing *The Privilege to Serve the Public: An Exposé*.

"This book is primarily informed by the current leadership context in the public sector. Some appointed leaders tend to behave as if they are a gift to mankind. In many instances, such leaders fail to appreciate that their position is one of privilege," he says.

Itumeleng's motto in life is that if you don't stand for something in life, you will fall for everything, thus compromising personal integrity.

With his willingness to stand up for what he believes in, combined with excellent academic credentials and leadership skills, Itumeleng has no intention of compromising on the quality of education in the province. Learners and educators can only be the better for his appointment to the top post. ▀

Anca seizes her opportunities



Ms Anca Swart loves young people and enjoys listening to their opinions.

The passion she has for her job, an aptitude for teaching and a life motto that urges her to seize every opportunity.

These are some of the ingredients of the winning recipe of Ms Anca Swart, deputy head of Hoërskool Schoonspruit in Klerksdorp.

Earlier this year she ended third in the Department of Basic Education's National Teaching Awards, having made a clean sweep in the North West in the category Excellence in Secondary School Leadership.

Although she shies away from the spotlight, she talks easily about teaching and her alma mater, the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE).

IT ALL STARTED HERE

As primaria of Karlien in 1986 and BCom student, Anca remained true to her motto and seized every opportunity that crossed her path.

"It was at the PU for CHE that I was first introduced to leadership and realised that life is filled with opportunities. Everything I have in life started there. However, if I were to go back today I would do things differently as primaria and as chairperson of the council of residences; I would have liked to empower women more."

Her late parents were both teachers and the reason why she is "genetically programmed to teach".

On the home front, she has nothing but praise for her colleagues. "I am part of a team and my principal, Mr Dries de Beer, gives me wings."

She describes her relationship with Dries, another alumnus of the Potchefstroom Campus, as a perfect complement of strengths, and she appreciates his open-door policy.

The other significant man in her life is Mr Nico Swart, who has been by her side for more than 24 years. It was love at first sight, and the wedding was preceded by a whirlwind romance of three months. Nico is her pillar of strength and her best friend.

BEYOND THE SCHOOL GATES

Anca believes that every child is entitled to trust and honesty and she never discusses children with their parents without their knowledge. In her books, gossip is a big taboo.

She is also a firm believer in empowering children for life beyond the school gates.

"As custodian of the Learners' Council I try to prepare them now for leadership challenges they might face later in life. I teach them about the procedures of a meeting, taking minutes, organising projects and compiling a statement of income and expenditure after concluding a project.

"I believe in participatory management and like to listen to the opinions of different generations. I am incredibly excited about our youth and positive about education. We have come a long way.

"I mark matric papers and am also involved with memorandum discussions, and can assure you that very good quality measures are applied. I believe in the standard of matric and have confidence in Umalusi."

Anca believes that each day brings opportunities to add to your CV, and her goal is to empower everyone who crosses her path to achieve his or her goals as well. ▀

Prize-winning teacher and alumna of the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, Ms Anca Swart, believes that the child should always come first. She also has confidence in the standard of matric and in Umalusi, the council that plays watchdog to the quality of teaching and training in South Africa.

CHANGE can be

Ms Sonia Veiga, an alumna who graduated top of her class at the Vaal Triangle Campus, knows that life does not always go strictly according to plan. She believes the more open you are to change, the greater your chances of success.

Life is what happens when you make other plans. This is something you will hear often from Ms Sonia Veiga.

As a professional, a wife and mother (“not necessarily in that order”) she learned to tackle life by the horns. All of this is a balancing act that takes careful planning but in the end, she says smiling, it is dodging the rush hour bullet that seems to be the biggest challenge of the day.

Sonia, who studied on the Vaal Triangle Campus and is an industrial psychologist registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, is considered an expert in the field of human resources management.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

As a BCom graduate in industrial psychology in 1999 (top of her class), she was shortlisted to pursue an honours degree through the university. She excelled in the degree, developed an interest in labour relations and added a certificate in labour relations to her academic credentials – again finishing at the top of her class.

Her road to further academic excellence was assured and continuing her studies would have been the obvious next step. Then life happened, as Sonia would say, and instead she decided to gain practical experience in the field of industrial psychology. Much to her lecturers’ dismay, she started working as a recruitment consultant for an international recruitment firm.

She continued her studies part time (through Unisa) while working full time and 10 years later received her MCom in industrial and organisational psychology. She admits it was not easy “but definitely worth it as it allowed me the best of both worlds”.

“I am glad I entered the world of work at the time I did. Our discipline is very dynamic and always evolving, so you need to balance academic knowledge with practical experience all the time. It was great to have the theory that I had acquired at university to support me when applying it practically at work. People tend to respect your opinion at work knowing that you have the academic background to support it,” she says.

HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Her memories of her university career remain a highlight, as does the excellent career guidance she received there, inspiring her to choose a career she loves.

Initially, Sonia had planned to study chartered accountancy; then Prof Christo van Wyk, who still is a lecturer at the campus, advised her to consider studying industrial psychology. “It was a new and up-and-coming discipline. I liked what I had read about it and registered for the BCom degree, given my aptitude for accountancy and more commercial disciplines,” she says.

Her career choice has taken her into the boardrooms of big companies such as Vodacom, Deloitte & Touche and PepsiCo.

As change lead in the human resources department at Simba Pty Ltd (part of PepsiCo) since October last year, Sonia feels she has found her forte.

“I was very privileged to move into an organisational effectiveness and change role at my



Ms Sonia Veiga is a career woman and mother to Gabriella.

GOOD for you

previous employer, Vodacom. Working with the entire organisation, across levels, titles and roles to engage on transformational changes, was a life-changing experience and gave me the opportunity to find my niche," she says.

Interacting with people has its challenges but Sonia says she enjoys being part of transformational change in her workplace. "It is an old cliché but very true in our field of work. Working with people is always a challenge as you need to be mindful that people are unique individuals and what may work for some may not necessarily work for others."

LIFE HAPPENS

Her life thus far might sound all work and no play, but in the midst of her MCom studies, Sonia tied the knot with the love of her life.

After completing her studies five years ago she fell pregnant. Yes, life happened... Sonia adores her four-year-old "busybody" Gabrielle and says she is the centre of their world.

Being a busy working mom during the week with early mornings and late nights takes its toll, but Sonia has it all figured out.

She exercises regularly at the local gym and participates in fun runs to stay healthy and fit.

Weekends are family time and they also enjoy going away on holiday at least twice a year.

NEW BEGINNINGS

When her contract at Vodacom expired in July last year, Sonia took a two-month break to spend time with her daughter.

"It is not easy to leave an organisation after six years but the timing was right for me. The universe had aligned for me. Every organisation I have been with has prepared me for the next role and challenge," she says. She used the time to take stock of her life and this led to her joining Simba/PepsiCo.

"I had never worked in the fast moving consumer goods industry before and I must admit that I am thoroughly enjoying the experience. Every day has its new challenges, but for now I believe that I am where I am meant to be," she says.

In order to grow, you need to change – this is yet another wisdom with compliments from Sonia Veiga. ▸

Sonia and Daniel Veiga recently celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary. Daniel is a foreign exchange trader and little Gabriella is the love of their life.



Mastering the balancing act

As a working mother with a high-powered job, nobody knows better than Sonia Veiga how important it is to maintain a healthy sense of balance.

She has been aware of the need for balance since her student days at the Vaal Triangle Campus when she was a member of Soenie Day Hostel and held one of the leadership portfolios.

"Participating in activities on campus is something I would highly recommend to any student. You need a healthy balance

between studying and being sociable. It helped me grow in terms of my confidence and the exposure was great," she says.

Work-life balance remained a subject close to her heart. In 2010, Sonia was invited to present her research on work-life balance in a call centre environment, particularly for black men and women, at a world conference on psychological health at Utrecht University, Amsterdam. In the same year she published an article on her findings in the *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*. ▸

For her it's not business as usual

As a transformational leader, NWU alumna of the Mafikeng Campus and one of only a handful of female municipal managers in South Africa, Ms Matlakala Matthews does not do things the usual way.

A transformational leader is a person who strives to change things for the better.

This is the role that Ms Matlakala Matthews plays at the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the North West Province.

"A transformational leader does not say, 'I've been here for 20 years and this is how we have always done things'. No, such a leader will say, 'We are not going to do the same things we have always done without seeing better results'. It must not be business as usual," Matlakala says.

In the short time since her appointment as municipal manager in May 2013, Matlakala has been ringing in the changes – not in dramatic, headline-grabbing ways but quietly and systematically.

"Mostly, I have been putting people, processes and systems in place," she says. "One of the major challenges facing municipalities is that a lot of government functions have been devolved to district level. We have a hundred and one different functions! However, when you recruit human capital for these functions, municipalities are given strict staff cost limitations by the National Treasury."

As a result, municipalities often have many vacant positions in top management, which obviously affects productivity, and in turn service delivery.

This was exactly the situation Matlakala encountered on arriving at the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, where six direc-

tor-level positions had been vacant for almost three years. She moved decisively to fill the gaps. Before the year was out, all six vacancies had been filled and the district was ready to tackle the challenges.

CULTURE OF WORK

"In provincial government, where I was for the first two terms of the democratic government, you work, work, work," she says.

"In local government, the attitude is sometimes laissez-faire (relaxed and hands-off). People say they are only paid for eight hours – although it seems to me that many local government officials don't work a full eight hours.

"At the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, I have been putting systems in place to ensure that a culture of work is enhanced."

Matlakala herself has been called a workaholic. "I don't know what that means; I just want to work and contribute to transforming our society and earn my salary.

"I have also been given other names, such as 'Margaret Thatcher,'" she says, laughing at the idea of being compared to the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom.

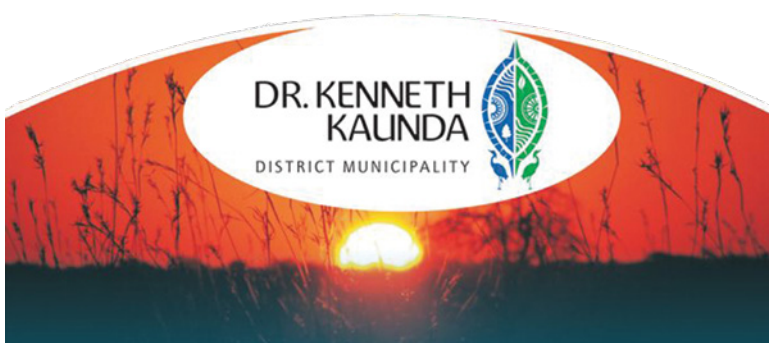
"I want to do things correctly. I know that a man who does this would not be given names. I don't mind because I have the skills and knowledge to manage gender stereotypes and I am a scholar of the gender discourse."

Indeed she is. What's more, as you will soon see, the NWU has played a part in helping to equip her for this.

From 2006 to 2010, she studied part time for her master's degree in international relations, focusing on the gender machinery in government.

TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

"My studies and practical experience have given me an intimate knowledge of the challenges women experience," Matlakala says.





Ms Matlakala Matthews is excited about change, but she believes that change should not be dramatised or sensationalised; instead, it should be dealt with quietly and systematically.

She believes that gender equality is at last becoming a reality in South Africa. "Gender stereotypes have definitely subsided. These days, men are taking care of children and even changing nappies."

In the municipal management profession, however, there is still room for improvement. "It is cold up here," she says, referring to the few women municipal managers at South Africa's 226 municipalities. "Why are women not in these positions? The instruments are there and have created an enabling environment so why are we not progressing as we should be?"

Asked what it takes to succeed in this environment where women are still heavily outnumbered, she says: "Theoretical and practical knowledge of local government, and emotional intelligence."

"It is important to stick to the facts and not personalise issues, to follow processes and procedures, and to try to remain objective and rational. A person must also unleash the skills and knowledge to manage the interface between political leadership and administration leadership."

It's a tall order but one that Matlakala is determined to deliver on as she continues with business unusual at Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality. ▶

Her road leads to municipal management

Initially, Matlakala's career ambition was to become a medical professional. "Two of my siblings had TB, which was cured, and as the eldest child I took care of them. That experience propelled me into a caring profession."

She enrolled for a three-year paramedical diploma (occupational therapy) at the Medical University of South Africa and completed the first two years. Then, in 1980, she was expelled for political activism.

"The only school where I could finish my diploma was in Namibia and I could not leave South Africa because of my family situation."

Instead, she registered for a BCom degree at Turfloop University in Limpopo, but soon changed to a BA Administration degree, majoring in political science. After completing her honours in international politics, also at Turfloop, she became a trainer with the Urban Training Project (UTP).

Three years later, she joined the trade union SACCAWU.

"As a trade union educator and official, I taught workers about conflict resolution, human rights and negotiation skills," says Matlakala. She also co-authored a handbook on women's rights, *Filling the Gap*, used by SACCAWU and COSATU to train union officials.

In 1995, Matlakala joined the Office of the Premier of North West in Mafikeng. There, she established the Provincial Gender Commission, which later became the Office on the Status of Women.

"I was dealing with a totally new concept, gender equality, and at the same time gaining a lot of experience of government work, processes and legislative imperatives."

After eight years with the Premier's Office, head-hunters convinced her to move to local government. She spent four years at the Tlokwe City Council in Potchefstroom and then moved to the Matlosana Municipality.

Finally, her road led to the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, where she is still the municipal manager. ▶

Sandra spreads her wings Down Under

Ms Sandra Joubert, metallurgist and alumna of the Potchefstroom Campus, has spread her wings. Not only does she work in Australia where she has to fly to work, she also vacations in the Far East whenever the travel bug bites.

To Ms Sandra Joubert, seasoned traveller and senior project metallurgist at AngloGold Ashanti's Tropicana Mine in Australia, her student years on the Potchefstroom Campus will always be a store of precious memories.

It is here on campus and in Huis Republiek where she forged many lifelong friendships – friends who still support her through thick and thin.

The Tropicana Mine where she works is a joint venture between AngloGold Ashanti (70%) and the Independence Group NL (30%). The construction was completed last year and the first gold was produced in September 2013.

"It was a big milestone for AngloGold Ashanti and for every person who contributed to make it possible. During the first three years of production the plant is expected to produce between 470 000 and 490 000 ounces of gold per year," explains Sandra.

NWU TAUGHT HER TEAMWORK

Teamwork comes naturally to Sandra; after all, the foundation for this was laid when she was a student.

"As a first-year student I learnt what it means to be part of a team and how people with different backgrounds and personalities can stand and work together for a common purpose.

"I was fresh out of my parents' house and it was also during this time that I learnt, under the guidance of the senior students, how to look after myself."

Sandra matriculated in 2003 from the Hoërskool Vaalharts in the Northern Cape; she was her school's dux student.

GEARED FOR THE FUTURE

The balance maintained by her parents between discipline and love and her childhood years on the farm in the Vaalharts area are some of the other ingredients that prepared her for her future. Sandra attaches great value to ambitious people. She ascribes her success to wonderful role models who taught her that

you are responsible for your own future and that you get out what you put in.

She enrolled at the Potchefstroom Campus in 2004 and obtained her BEng degree with distinction in 2007. Her main subject was chemical engineering, with specialisation in mineral processing.

She started to do vacation work at AngloGold Ashanti during her student years and in 2008 was appointed full time at the Kopanang plant near Orkney in the North West Province.

After a six-month stint at AngloGold Ashanti's west plant in North West, she moved to Australia in February 2012.

"I've come to realise that workplace success largely depends on your ability to get along with various types of people and to know when to listen and when to speak.

"The NWU exposed me to situations where I could gain some knowledge of humanity."

NOT ALL MOONLIGHT AND ROSES

She readily admits that she thought her relocation to Australia would be a breeze and that she could not wait for the new challenge.

"Little did I know that it is no small feat to move to a foreign country on your own. I quickly learnt that I can't pick up the phone and call mom and dad whenever I need to figure out something and that it takes much more willpower to do things on your own.

"But it taught me a lot about myself and my abilities. Now I enjoy every moment; even when I'm forced out of my comfort zone to do something new."

TRAVELLING, AND MORE TRAVELLING

Sandra uses every opportunity to travel and has already visited several Asian countries. She only recently returned from her second vacation in Singapore.

"I've tried quite a few hobbies, but most were short-lived. The only one that seems to keep my interest and that will definitely continue to



I also visited Singapore (top) and South Korea (below).

Here I am in Vietnam (top left), and on the picture next to it, I am in Perth. Currabmine, where I live, is in Perth.

This is the mine where I work.

play a major role in my life is to explore other countries.

"The travel bug has bitten me and I enjoy every moment. I enjoy the planning, the exposure to new places, people, cultures, food and then of course talking about it and comparing it with other countries afterwards.

"It is a wonderful experience and I appreciate every opportunity that I get to do it."

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

According to Sandra, the homesickness never really goes away – but you learn to live with it.

"It's always the small things that you took for granted that you miss: South African humour, music, rugby and decent biltong.

"Fortunately there are so many South Africans these days that there are several places where you can get real South African food and sweets and every once in a while we get an opportunity to listen to a South African singer right here in Perth."

HER TOWN DOWN UNDER

She lives in Currabmine in Perth, 4 km from the beach. Her neighbourhood is quiet, but

still close enough to the city, and there's an excellent public transport system.

The mine where she works is located in the semi-desert region of Western Australia – approximately 300 km north-east of Kalgoorlie, which in turn is almost 600 km from Perth.

"I have a FIFO job: fly in, fly out. I fly to the mine, work for eight days and fly back to Perth for my six days off.

"I've been in Australia for two years. During my first year I was a senior production metallurgist at Sunrise Dam gold mine. Last year I was transferred to Tropicana as a senior project metallurgist.

"The amazing thing about working for a large company – there are always opportunities to relocate and take on new challenges."

However, hard work, gallivanting and spreading wings are not her only dreams.

"I hope to one day be blessed with a family of my own," she says.

Because wings are not just for flying – they also protect. ▾

Ms Sandra Joubert is a globetrotter. If she's not flying the 900 km between her home in Perth and her job, the gold mine near Kalgoorlie, she's off to the Far East. On her pin board there is a picture of the gold mine where she works and one of Perth, where she lives. The others are vacation photos taken in South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore.

Sandile is captain of the HR ship

Hard work doesn't kill, but laziness does. These words inspired Mr Sandile Khwela, alumnus of the Vaal Triangle Campus, to set sail for success.

Hard work, commitment and determination are key words describing Mr Sandile Khwela's journey to success.

He never does anything in half measures. As a student, for instance, he attended both part-time and full-time classes for his BA degree in industrial psychology.

As the best BA student on campus in his second and third year he went on to complete his BAHons and MA in industrial psychology. Today he is a registered industrial psychologist and recently joined the Board of Afrisam Cement as human resources (HR) director.

WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

Sandile's motto in life comes as no surprise – "hard work doesn't kill, but laziness does".

He attributes these wise words to his late father who also inspired him to follow a career in industrial psychology.

"My father was a supervisor at a steel company and was dealing with a lot of people issues. I believe I then developed an interest in knowing more about human behaviour and people dynamics."

As a young student from Shongweni Dam close to Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal, he came to the far-off Vaal Triangle Campus (then a satellite campus of the Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education).

"The campus provides both academic and personal growth. You can identify your weaknesses and strengths easier here, because you are not just a number. The campus has a reputation for delivering high-calibre students, and I do believe, was it not for this campus, I would not be where I am today," says Sandile.

LOVE AND LIFE

Sandile stayed in the campus residence, Vergelegen, until he completed his studies.

For him, this was the heartbeat of the campus, a place

where he learned the importance of inter-cultural interaction.

"I had the opportunity to mingle with students from various places and cultures. This played a major role in my career and personal development," he says.

Sandile fondly remembers his term as vice-captain of the soccer team, playing intervarsity matches. Today, he still loves soccer and his favourite team is Kaizer Chiefs.

It was also on the Vaal Triangle Campus that he encountered the two biggest loves in his life. Here he met his wife, also an industrial psychologist, and today they are happily married and have a little girl.

The other love in his life is music – something he nurtured during his years as a member of the campus choir, Watuni.

Today, when he is not in the boardroom, he is music producer and manager for Madlala Brothers, a well-known traditional band.

Sandile is also an accomplished artist who has also recorded a number of his own albums. Besides his family, he treasures his two guitars: one an electrical guitar and the other a 12 string acoustics guitar.

GOING FORWARD

Sandile describes his new position at Afrisam as being "captain of the ship", providing him an opportunity to implement his human resources philosophy and to lead and guide his team of executives to add value to the business.

He is using every iota of the knowledge and experience gained first as a supervisor at ArcelorMittal, then as general manager for human resources at BMW and next as group executive for talent management at Vodacom Group.

It is clear that good human resources will add value to any business and with captain Sandile at the helm, the HR ship is heading in the right direction. ▸

Mr Sandile Khwela believes that human resources is a critical success factor in positioning Africa in the global business market.





Alumni reunite in Molen Kórus

Any member would tell you: once song becomes your passion, it will always be your passion.

The penchant for choir music of a group of alumni and postgraduate students led to the start of a top-notch chamber choir for adults in Potchefstroom.

Molen Kórus was founded in 2011 by seasoned choristers who wanted to keep singing after completing their studies at the NWU.

The choir, consisting mainly of Potchefstroom residents, is led by Lorette du Toit and Kobus Venter, both very competent choirmasters.

Molen Kórus presently consists of 35 members, more or less the maximum number of members for a choir of its kind. Although most of the members are NWU alumni, anyone who is interested can audition at the beginning of each year. "The only prerequisite is a love of singing and some previous choir experience," says Adriaan Jacobs, spokesperson for the choir.

"The name of the choir was derived from a familiar street in the heart of Potchefstroom, Molen Street, home of Potchefstroom Gimnasium's cultural centre, where the choir rehearses every Monday evening. 'Kórus' is the Hungarian word for choir," explains Adriaan.

The choir expresses their adoration of music by performing at various events and occasions. These include Christmas services, weddings and choir festivals. Every year Molen Kórus organises a spring concert.

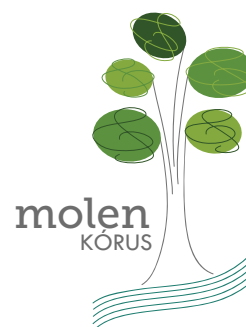
"We sing everything from well-known classical choral compositions by Bach and Mendelssohn to modern pieces by Eric Whitacre, Knut Nystedt and Morten Lauridsen," says Izak de Kock, chairperson.

Their repertoire also includes creations by local composers. Compositions by Awie van Wyk, Martin Watt and Chris Lamprecht regularly feature in performances by the choir. Sometimes they even sing songs by more commercial artists, like Koos du Plessis.

Izak says that they plan to record a CD in the future. "But it's a bit soon to say anything about that. We also hope to undertake a European tour within the next couple of years. Once we are there, we would like to participate in a chamber choir festival in Spain."

Molen Kórus is available for performances. For more information call Izak at 082 447 0693 or send an email to izakdekock@gmail.com. Those who are interested can stay abreast of performances, news and auditions by "liking" the choir on their Facebook fan page at www.facebook.com/MolenKorus. ▶

Molen Kórus is a top-notch chamber choir from Potchefstroom consisting mainly of NWU alumni. Here Lorette du Toit, choirmaster (centre), accompanies some of the choir members. On her right is Mr Kobus Venter, the other choirmaster.





Hard work and progress go hand in hand here

Over the plains of the North West Province, just before the Botswana border, lie the modern buildings of the Mafikeng Campus. Join Eish! on a visit to this campus where hard work and enthusiasm combine to ensure progress.

The Mafikeng Campus, situated in Mafikeng, the capital of the province, has shown steady growth during the past few years.

This progress is not only evident in their teaching-learning and research, but also in their infrastructure and healthy student life.

The campus attracts students and lecturers from elsewhere, mostly other African countries. In 2013, there were 561 international students from 25 different countries.

Today, the campus boasts 10 580 students of whom 2 660 are first years and 1 641 post-graduate students.

UNIQUE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Mafikeng Campus offers a number of academic programmes rarely encountered on any other South African university campus.

One of these is the degree in transport economics and logistics management. Another is the only BScAgric (Animal Health) programme in South Africa recognised for registration by the South African Veterinary Council.

In 2013, the campus launched the first multi-disciplinary teaching programme on indigenous knowledge systems accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority.

Indigenous knowledge refers to local knowledge and practices that develop naturally within a particular cultural group or society, and are therefore unique.

Another unique unit on campus is the Centre for Applied Radiation Science and Technology.

As a trailblazer in applied radiation science, this centre offers honours and master's programmes and has the mandate of doing

research and building capacity for the nuclear industry in South Africa.

BUILD THE FUTURE

Of course, all this teaching should take place in well-equipped buildings, which is why the NWU has invested significantly in new buildings and the refurbishment of existing ones over the past 10 years.

Between 2005 and 2012, new and upgraded residences saw more than 1 000 extra beds being made available to students. The NWU is currently building another two new residences, which will provide 486 more beds.

RESEARCH FLOURISHES

Research is one of the arenas in which the campus has shown excellent growth in recent years.

At the NWU, research is done according to a particular model. Based on this model, the following research entities have found a home on the campus:

Focus area:

- Material Science Innovation and Modelling (MaSIM)

Niche areas:

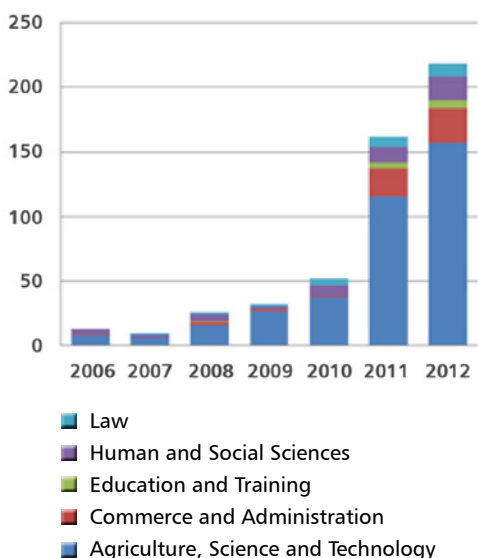
- Population and Health
- Food Security and Safety in the North West Province

Research at the campus has come a long way since 2008, when there were no researchers rated by the National Research Foundation (NRF); by 2009, the campus had three rated researchers and this leapt to 18 in 2013.

Similarly, the number of postdoctoral fellows – researchers with a PhD engaged in follow-up research – increased from one in 2007 to 35 in 2013.



Between 2006 and 2012, the research outputs per faculty increased as follows:



STAFF EXCEL

Campus staff members excel in various domains. At the end of 2013, Prof Abayomi Oyekale from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology was announced the most productive NWU researcher of 2012.

During the previous year, Prof Eno Ebenso, currently the dean of this faculty, received the NWU’s award for leadership in research for 2011.

Prof Nicolene Barkhuizen, an academic from the Faculty of Commerce and Administration, was named one of South Africa’s most talented young leaders after progressing to the final round of the DHL Rising Star Awards competition in 2013.

Two academics from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology received national awards:

- Dr Lebo Seru was named South Africa’s Most Influential Woman in Science; and
- Dr Hunadi Rakhudu received the South African Society for Teaching and Learning

in Higher Education Award for exceptional teaching-learning in South Africa.

Many academics have also shared their expertise nationally and internationally.

Prof Rodney Modupe, also from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, is one of two NWU staff members to be elected as members of the NRF’s Astronomy Council at the end of 2013.

In addition, Prof Mervin Mbaob, dean of the Faculty of Law, has been one of the experts on a committee tasked with developing a new constitution for Zambia since 2012.

STUDENT FUN

Mafikeng students sensibly maintain a healthy balance between studying and their cultural and sporting activities.

The campus choir have been the regional champions of the Telkom/Old Mutual choir championships for four years in a row. They came second in the Sedibeng choral competition and represented the region at the National Choir Festival.

The sportsmen and women of the Mafikeng Campus literally shone at the University Sports South Africa Championships last year.

The body building team won a gold medal, the aerobics team won five silver and two bronze medals, and the boxing team won one gold and two silver medals.

When looking back at the footprints so many students and lecturers have left on the campus in the past decade, it is clear that their determination and hard work have turned hopes and dreams into reality since 2004.

Today the Mafikeng Campus takes its rightful place – within the NWU as an institution and within the bigger teaching-learning and research community of South Africa. ▸

* The figures had not been audited at the time of going to press.

The NWU gift that keeps on giving

Charity helps for a day or two, but empowerment lasts forever.

Ms Beatrix Bouwman tells us how the NWU brings hope to communities.

The NWU firmly believes in the old proverb that when you teach a man to fish, you feed him (and his family) for a lifetime.

In line with this old adage the NWU's numerous community engagement projects focus more on sustainability than mere charity.

Ms Beatrix Bouwman, the institutional director for community engagement, says their primary concern is to make a difference by uplifting, developing and supporting the broader community.

"We reach out in ways that build trust and give people and organisations the confidence to approach us for assistance. "To us, making a difference is not just about becoming involved with good causes; it is about implementing our expertise in an innovative manner to achieve sustainable improvement for our society."

Although the university sometimes conducts fundraising campaigns to help pay for these activities, or charges nominal fees for direct project costs, the NWU does not seek to make a profit from community engagement and sees it as a way to contribute to the well-being of society.

To the NWU's community involvement team, partners and donors, it is more than just a labour of love. "As part of the fulfilment of our human calling, we all have a need to grow spiritually and this growth can only happen when we contribute beyond ourselves," says Beatrix.

SUSTAINABILITY MADE BY MOSAIC

The NWU's flagship community engagement project is Mosaic Community Developments, a project in Ikageng outside Potchefstroom. The main aim of this non-profit organisation is to create jobs for the foster parents taking part in its programme for orphans affected by HIV/Aids.

Mosaic has dramatically changed the lives of many foster families. Twenty families who only had shacks for homes have received houses.

In its five-year existence, the project, managed by Mr Meyer Conradie and his wife, Louise, has achieved great success.

In addition to building houses, beneficiaries of the project make everything from gourmet cupcakes, rusks and cookies to scarves, hats, baby products, handbags, wallets, pillows and corporate gifts. Some of these products are for the local market and some are exported overseas.

The project also provides pre-school and after-school recreation facilities for orphans. Furthermore it sustains families by providing employment for foster parents thus ensuring better living conditions for those affected by HIV/Aids.

TAKING MATRICULANTS INTO THE FUTURE

Another flagship community engagement initiative, the Ikateleng programme, has assisted thousands of grade 12 learners to pass matric with full university exemption.

The project invests in the future of young South Africans by providing Saturday supplementary classes to learners, ensuring that they master subjects and study content.

The programme, now in its 26th year, has had considerable success. The pass rate among Ikateleng-enrolled learners is substantially higher than the national average. It consistently ranges between 85% and 90%.

Ms Sannah Soul of the Made by Mosaic project makes leather products such as these.

Projects and programmes better lives

Other community involvement projects of the NWU are also bettering the lives of thousands of people.

- The Laboratory for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (PLIEM) has been a lifeline for hundreds of children born with inborn errors of metabolism.

It provides the initial diagnostic service at a market-related price but, once a child is diagnosed with a metabolic defect, it conducts all subsequent tests at no cost for the rest of the patient's life.

- The Law Clinic provides free legal assistance to poor and indigent people caught up in eviction matters, divorce actions, maintenance orders, the Children's Court, land claims and civil cases, among others.
- The community engagement activities of the Soccer Institute help to make the dreams of future soccer stars come true.
- The Siyakhulisa Early Childhood Education community engagement project assists early childhood education practitioners in some Vaal Triangle townships to run their centres more effectively. The project has reached about 300 township practitioners and more than 16 000 pre-schoolers.
- The Musikhane community project made its debut in 1994, teaching talented young musicians to play music instruments, to take music examinations, and join youth orchestras.
- The NWU's multilingual reading project and the Language Directorate's interpreting projects make multilingual learning possible by enabling young people to learn in their mother tongue.
- The Engineering Faculty runs four community engagement projects designed to help increase the number and readiness of students enrolling for science, engineering and technology studies at universities. ▶

An important reason for the success of Ikateleng is the close relationships with programme partners, including the education authorities, participating schools and corporate donors.

PROVIDING FRESH WATER FOR MADIBOGO

The NWU knows that water is one of the most needed basic resources. Through the Madibogo project, a water purification system based on nanotechnology produces up to 10 000 litres of purified water a day.

This makes a significant difference to the lives of 1 000 learners and teachers at Batlhaping Primary School who previously only had access to untreated, contaminated ground water in the village of Madibogo in the North West Province.

The project also teaches the importance of safe drinking water and the use of water in general.

SOWING AND SEWING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

The Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) on the Potchefstroom Campus has established the Farm Labour and General Health programme (FLAGH) and the highly successful Holding Hands community engagement project.

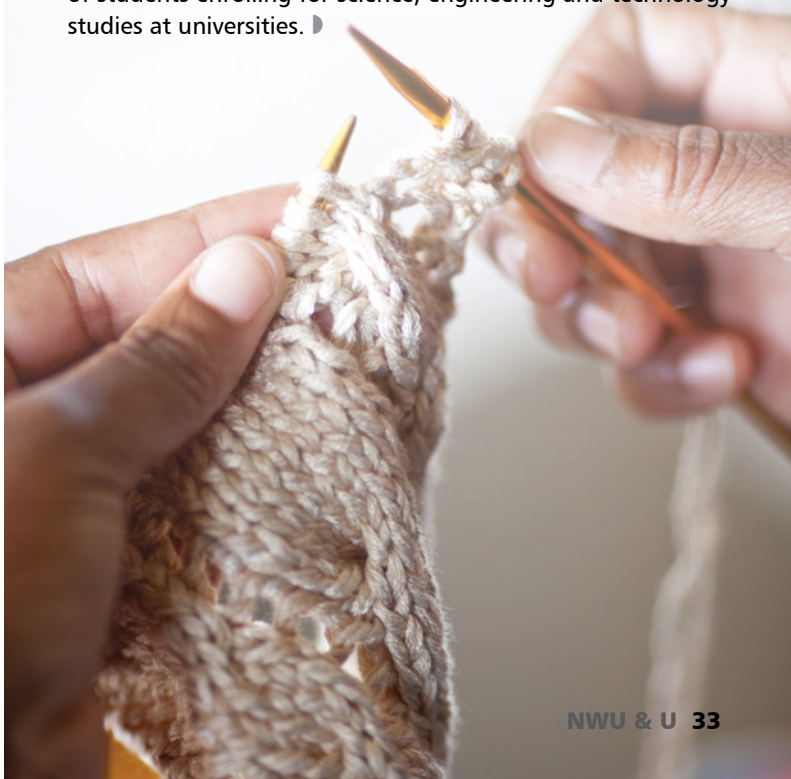
These programmes respectively teach farm women good eating habits and how to generate income by sewing and making glass objects. The original group of seven seamstresses earn between R1 200 and R6 000 each a month through orders for their products from customers across the country and has recently started exporting to Belgium.

The project that started out in the Rysmierbult district has reached the point where its existing projects are self-sustaining.

THE MESSAGE IS HOPE

Mr Johan Zerwick of the NWU is bringing home the message that there is hope in the battle against HIV/Aids.

By translating "God's answer to Aids" into Afrikaans and Setswana, he has reached more than 40 000 people in South Africa and Botswana with this message of hope since 2002. ▶





Industry crowns NWU *graphic design talent*

Alumni who studied graphic design have always excelled in various national competitions and last year they once again did exceptionally well.

Talent. Loads and loads of talent. This is something abundantly generated by the subject group Graphic Design in the NWU's School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Testimony to this is the impressive success rate of former students who are now in the industry.

"We are very proud of our former students. They have proven that with hard work, determination and talent, the world is your oyster," says Richardt Strydom, lecturer in graphic design.

Alumni from the Graphic Design Department have been raking in awards. They boast a Pendorring win, a silver award at the Loeries, an extraordinary exhibition at the Design Indaba and a merit award from the International Society of Typographic Designers (ISTD).

STANDING OUT AT THE PENDORINGS AND THE LOERIES

Natasha Prinsloo is a star. Since starting her degree in graphic design at the NWU, she has

earned quite a collection of awards. In 2012, Natasha was the overall winner of the Pendorring student competition, an illustrious event that annually honours the best of the best in advertising.

She also received a gold award at this event for an integrated campaign with Michelle Bruwer, Nadia Jansen van Vuuren and Ilse Viljoen, namely "Blink Stefanus Zef motor accessories".

Her work was also crowned at the Loerie Awards, which recognises creativity in the South African advertising industry. She received a silver award at the 2013 Loeries for her work, "Alice in short supply", and a bronze award for her design, "The Waitress".

"I started working as an art director at Ogilvy & Mather in Johannesburg right after university. It was exciting to be part of a creative team," she says. In February this year, Natasha completed her projects at this company. She is currently on the lookout for new opportunities, and hopes to find a position that will earn her more experience in the industry.



Natasha Prinsloo's integrated campaign with Michelle Bruwer, Nadia Jansen van Vuuren and Ilse Viljoen, namely "Blink Stefanus Zef motor accessories" earned them a gold award at the Pendorings.



UP-AND-COMING DESIGNER EXHIBITS WORK AT DESIGN INDABA

Simone le Roux is one of only 40 of the best young designers in South Africa who were chosen to exhibit at the Design Indaba in Cape Town. Her collection of soft figures and illustrations was shown as part of the Emerging Creatives Programme at this prestigious event.

Her work could also be viewed last year at Aardklop as part of the exhibition entitled "Collateral". This exhibition included works by local lecturers and designers, Ian Marley, Wessie van der Westhuizen, Gordon Fraud and Stefan Pretorius.

Simone now works as a freelance artist and illustrator. She plans to enrol for a master's degree in visual art and illustration art.

"The Graphic Design Department of the NWU offers an excellent programme, with lecturers who help to shape and encourage students but also challenge them to achieve their full potential. I like their willingness to explore new ideas," says Simone.

Simone le Roux's work, "Spirit Guide", was part of the "Collateral" exhibition at the Aardklop National Arts Festival.

TO PAGE 36

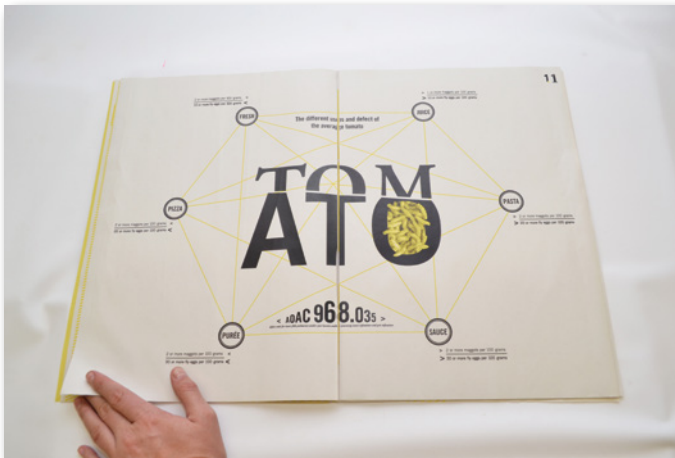


Colani Johnson is a typographic designer of note. Her work earned her a merit award from the International Society of Typographic Designers.

FROM PAGE 35

A TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGNER OF NOTE

Colani Johnson received a merit award from the International Society of Typographic Designers (ISTD). The ISTD is a professional body consisting of international members who are tasked with promoting an interest in all forms of typographic communication.



An international competition is held annually. Students can enter for a specific ISTD assignment, which entails the development of a concept built around typographic design elements.

“It was a great privilege and an honour to receive the merit award. Although it is not a competition where prizes are won, it is an honour to be able to add such a title to your CV.



“The NWU taught me that a privilege like this does not happen by chance. It requires hard work. If you want to dream big you must have a sense of purpose,” says Colani, art director at Owenkessel Leo Burnett in Fourways, Johannesburg.

Alumni of the Graphic Design Department of the NWU have also shone in other competitions. Simone le Roux, Karla Mülder, Daniéla Dique, Marli Mckellar, Illana Swanepoel and Llewellyn van Eeden won a second place at the ATKV Film Fundi Awards in 2013, and an artwork by JW Longland was chosen for a 2014 series of stamps featuring South African lighthouses. ▸

Following in Fossey's footsteps

It was the shortest, most indescribable and amazing hour of my entire life.

This is how Prof Minrie Greeff describes her visit to Rwanda, where she had the opportunity to observe mountain gorillas in their natural habitat.

Minrie is a senior researcher at the Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) on the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus.

She also recently received the Stals Prize for Nursing from the South African Academy for Science and Arts.

In addition, her contribution to research in nursing has earned her a place in the International Nurse Researchers' Hall of Fame of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society for Nurses.

Minrie is not only a world-class researcher, but also a globe-trotter who has been to the

top of Kilimanjaro and the depths of the coral reefs of the Great Barrier Reef.

"I've always wanted to visit the gorillas. I wanted to see them from up close," she says.

However, this dream was out of reach for many years because of wars and other conflict in Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC. These three countries are the only ones where you can see mountain gorillas in their natural habitat.

OVERWHELMING SCENTS AND MAJESTY

Minrie's dream came true in January. She visited the Virunga National Park as part of a tour group. It is the same park where Dian Fossey, the famous zoologist, undertook her extensive study of mountain gorillas. She was murdered in Rwanda in 1985.

"Humans and their wars have decreased the number of mountain gorillas to a mere 257.

TO PAGE 38

"When I saw the gorillas – so impressive and yet so vulnerable – I realised that God is protecting this delicate balance just as He keeps me safe on my journey through life."



Humanity triumphs

People overcome even the most devastating circumstances. It is here that Rwanda is a shining example for other countries.

The Rwandan people rose up from the devastating pain of genocide in 1994 where more than a million people lost their lives.

Minrie says a visit to a museum and a mass grave of 250 000 in Kigale brought to mind the cruel history for a moment. "It was awful to realise that many of the people were murdered in churches, where they believed they would be safe. What is even worse is that many of the churches intentionally ambushed people. Entire families were massacred in places of worship.

"There is a longing for progress and a determination to rebuild the country notwithstanding poverty."

Minrie says that one of the most precious things she saw in Rwanda was the Rwandan people's determination to keep their land clean.

"Under President Paul Kagame's leadership all people living in Rwanda are obliged to do a general cleanup every last Saturday of the month between 7:00 and 11:00. Everything comes to a standstill and everybody joins in to pick up litter to ensure that Rwanda is one of the cleanest countries in Africa.

"Rwanda is a country where there is a clear contrast between the gorillas' way of life in untouched nature and the people's poverty in the cities and the cruel history. The people of Rwanda are building a new harmony. A harmony between man and nature and also between the citizens, which is an inspiration to visitors like me." ▶

FROM PAGE 37

Fortunately, successful intervention has brought back their numbers to 840."

Minrie says they reached the bamboo forest after an hour's walk. "The smells of the forest, wet grass and vegetation were overwhelming."

Her experience of the intensity of the forest went hand in hand with great expectations that were later fulfilled by one of the most beautiful scenes she has ever seen in her life.

MEET THE SABYINYO FAMILY

"A mountain gorilla was lying curled up on his stomach in front of the tour group. His hands and feet were folded in underneath him. The rest of his family were close by.

"The tour guide told us ahead of time that these particular mountain gorillas were part of the Sabyinyo family," she says.

The guides taught the group to make a "hahoom" sound when they were with the gorillas. According to Minrie, this "hahoom" sound puts the gorillas at ease. The "ha" is made with an open mouth and the "hoom" is a deep sound made with a closed mouth.

"When the gorillas hear this greeting, they know that the visitors come in peace and friendship."

Apparently even a slight deviation from this sound can convey another message to the gorillas and jeopardise the visit.

The gorilla they saw first was second in the strict hierarchy maintained by the mountain gorillas. "When he got up I gasped. He was so strong, proud and self-confident as he walked past us."

According to Minrie, one of the most breathtaking moments was when the first gorilla's father, a 42 year-old 200 kg giant, the mighty leader and father of all the little ones in the troop, arrived.



"He calmly crossed the path and lay down in front of me. He was so close that I would have been able to stretch out my hand and touch him."

FAMILY SCENES UNFOLDING

The big patriarch calmly posed for the tour group. "It felt so unreal. I positively bubbled with delight, how could I be so lucky? He started to munch on a portion of his daily quota of 35 kg of plant material." It was while he was eating that Minrie had the opportunity to look into his soft brown eyes.

While he was eating, a mother and baby joined him. The small one started to climb over his father's back. "The father tolerated it like any patient father would. His caring disposition was clearly visible in the careful manner in which he took hold of the baby's arm."

According to Minrie what made the moment even more special was the fact that they were seeing the oldest and the youngest gorillas in the park together.

TODDLERS AND MONKEY TRICKS

Two three-year-olds started playing around near the tour group. The toddlers were exuberant – spinning, somersaulting and swinging on branches.

They even touched some of the people's trouser legs. This was a potential risk because the older members of the family are extremely protective of the little ones and the slightest misstep could have catastrophic consequences.

"But their joy was contagious and I couldn't help but laugh. We had to keep making the 'hahoom' sound so as to continually reassure the gorillas of our friendly intentions."

TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

The big one decided that it was time to go.

"He sat down in front of me with his back turned to me. I could see that he was still watching me from the corner of his eye.

"He waited for the mother and baby to walk past me. Almost as a parting gift, the baby swung on one last branch right in front of me. He jumped onto his mother's back and she calmly walked on with him on her back."

Minrie felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude at that very moment. "I called out in my heart. Thank you, Lord, for granting me this remarkable experience."

The visit came to a sudden end when an older member of the tour group wanted to have a picture taken with him in the foreground and the females in the background. He needed help to get up and the females found all the movement upsetting.

"She charged with her mouth wide open, showing her razor-sharp teeth. It was like she was trying to say that we had been welcome until then, but that they wanted their privacy back."

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

"When I think back to the hour that I got to spend with the gorillas, it fills me with a deep sense of peace. I know that just like the small ones are under the protection of their father, I am also safe with a heavenly Father who cares for me."

"I realise that He looks after me – just like He also looks after the gorillas in nature."

Minrie describes her visit to Rwanda's mountain gorillas as an intense spiritual experience.

"There was also a group of exceptional people with me on the tour. I had the privilege to hear snippets of their individual life journeys, stories of hurt, but also stories of victory." ▸

TOP LEFT: Minrie at the entrance of the park shortly before encountering the gorillas (top right).



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

We celebrate...



It all starts here™