



FROM DIRECTORS DESK

The Social Justice and Transformation Unit is pleased to share with you our third issue of the Social Justice and Transformation newsletter. In this issue we report on our stakeholder activities and events including a promising collaborative initiative with Letsema (consortium of more than 200 NGOs in southern Gauteng).

Another initiative is a multi-departmental collaboration on food insecurity which underpins the university's involvement in the Mandela Day. The food insecurity programme, is a practical direct response to the current reality faced by quite a number of our registered students who sadly go to bed hungry on a daily basis. Poverty, a social justice issue has myriad effects on student self-esteem, dignity, violence not to mention its bearing on student performance and unintended consequences of student drop out and low throughput rates.

We also report on the visit by the VUT delegation including members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) who attended the Food Security Colloquium at the University of Free State, Bloemfontein on 14 August 2015. The colloquium proved invaluable in getting insight into the scope and size of food insecurity amongst university students generally as well as learning from sister universities.

We continue with our roadshows which were held at our satellite campuses, i.e. Secunda, and Dayveton, on the 23-24 July respectively. Another initiative involves reporting on the inaugural Social Justice and Transformation Seminar Series, which was addressed by our guest speaker, Prof Gordon Zide, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Governance and Organisational Transformation, VUT. We also report on the partnership on a national campaign against gender violence and abuse in collaboration with Kwanela Enuf.

Another important component of the work of the Social Justice and Transformation Unit involves employment equity. The Social Justice and Transformation Unit led a VUT delegation which participated in the Employment Equity Roadshow organised by the Department of Labour. We trust that you will not only find this newsletter informative but also as a platform for collaboration with the Social Justice and Transformation Unit in our quest of institutionalising transformation at the VUT.

1. LETSEMA COMMUNITY GROUP, 03 JULY 2015

A meeting with Letsema, a consortium of organisations composed of NGO's in the Vereeniging /Three Rivers area took place between Letsema, Social Justice and Transformation and the Research Directorate. The purpose of the meeting was to explore possible collaboration as part of our community engagement mission. An outcome of the exploration was a planned collaboration with Letsema during the Gender Summit in celebration of national Women's Month.

2. MANDELA DAY, 17 JULY 2015

As part of the national and international celebration of the selfless deeds of Nelson Mandela, the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), organised the Mandela Day in honour of the work and struggles of this world icon, organised under the theme "Turn your 67 minutes into 67 items", staff were encouraged to donate sixty seven (67) food items for distribution to needy university students.



VUT staff packing food for needy students as part of the Mandela Day

This project was an outcome of the student poverty needs assessment conducted in June 2015. There is widespread poverty amongst the students of Vaal University of Technology, some of whom come from low socio-economic backgrounds. There is a need to ensure that together we bring hope and solidarity in addressing the challenge of student poverty.

Mandela Day was informed by the principle of charity begins at home, thus an appropriate vehicle to give back, by the university community by encouraging staff to contribute by donating non-perishable food and toiletries for the benefit of needy students. The event was organised jointly by Corporate Affairs, Student Counselling and Support and the Social Justice and Transformation Unit.

3. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TRANSFORMATION ROADSHOWS, 23-24 JULY 2015 (SECUNDA AND DAVEYTON)



Prof. Gordon Zide (in a cap), DVC: GOT together with the staff and SRC from the (Secunda) Campus

On the 23-24th July, the Social Justice and Transformation Unit travelled to Secunda and Daveyton satellite campuses, respectively as part of our roadshows. The roadshows are an opportunity to interact with staff in all campuses, to bring awareness about the role of the Social Justice and Transformation Unit, talk about the activities of the directorate as well as listen to transformation related challenges that staff and students might be grappling with.

Staff and students got to know about some of the Unit's activities which range from employment equity including disability, research and education, events such as celebrating of national calendar days, public lectures as well as consultancy services concerning satellite campuses.

The Social Justice and Transformation Unit intends to attend to the transformation challenges raised during the roadshows.

4. FOOD SECURITY COLLOQUIUM, 15 AUGUST 2015

The Social Justice and Transformation Unit led a VUT delegation including the Student Representative Council to the South African Higher Education Food Security Colloquium.

The colloquium was held at the University of Free State, Bloemfontein, on 15th August 2015. One of the outcomes of the colloquium include the following recommendations developed by the VUT delegation; to conduct a study to assess the level of food insecurity amongst students, raise funds to address the plight of food insecurity which affect students in various institutions of higher learning, encourage staff and students to offer support and, to strengthen the food security initiatives that were implemented in 2015.

5. INAUGURAL SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TRANSFORMATION SEMINAR, 17 AUGUST 2015

The Social Justice and Transformation Unit hosted an inaugural Social Justice and Transformation Seminar on 17 August 2015. The guest speaker was Prof Gordon Zide, Deputy Vice Chancellor : Governance and Organisational Transformation. Speaking on the topic "Oral Tradition as a Tool for Social Cohesion and Concientisation of Self, using oral tradition and oral history interchangeably, Prof Zide emphasised culture as a common denominator since time immemorial and illustrated this by stating that each continent, country and place has its own indigenous culture, customs and practises that are transmitted from generation to the next".



Some of the students at the Kwanele Enuf Campaign at VUT Amphitheatre

6. KWANELE –ENUF CAMPAIGN, 26 AUGUST 2015

As part of advancing the university's commitment to human rights, gender equity, non-violence and respect for humanity, the Social Justice and Transformation Unit has partnered with the Kwanele Enuf Campaign. The campaign was launched at Vaal University of Technology with the view of combating gender based violence within the university community.

The campaign is a culmination of numerous presentations (on gender based violence and trauma and its effect on victims) and engagement to internal stakeholders made by this non-governmental organisation.

The launch which was well supported by the university community was attended by both staff and students, all wearing Kwanele –Enuf red and black T-shirts and caps.

The purpose of Kwanele-Enuf campaign is to bring a zero gender based violence across the country. Some of the stakeholders that participated include the HIV/AIDS Unit, Student Counselling and Support, Corporate Affairs and Sedibeng District Municipality.

7. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ROADSHOW, 07 SEPTEMBER 2015



VUT delegation at the Department of Labour EE Roadshow

One of the key functions of the Social Justice and Transformation Unit is employment equity. In the South African context employment equity is aimed at providing equitable and fair employment opportunities to designated groups as per the Employment Equity Act, 1998. A VUT delegation attended the Employment Equity Roadshow organised by the Department of Labour which took place at Emperors Palace, Boksburg on 07 September 2015.

The Roadshow is part of raising awareness amongst designated employers of the Employment Equity Amendments Act, 2014. Also some of the objectives of the Employment Equity Roadshows was to: publicize the regulated employment equity templates (EE Analysis-EEA12 and EE Plan-EEA13), publicize the Code of Good Practice on Equal Pay/Remuneration for Work of Equal Value, encourage designated employers to submit EE Reports on-line and equip designated employers on the presentation of employment equity cases at the CCMA.