



## FROM DIRECTORS DESK

2015 is almost over, the Social Justice and Transformation Unit has achieved many milestones having set ourselves very ambitious targets at the beginning of the current academic year. Now that the holiday season is knocking on the door the Social Justice and Transformation Unit is quite pleased for the progress made towards realising the targets we set for ourselves. During this year our mission of institutionalising transformation across the University came to life.

To date the Social Justice and Transformation Team embarked on roadshows to all three Provinces in which Vaal University of Technology has a footprint.

We are closing the year, 2015 having the year of firsts for the Social Justice and Transformation Unit. We spearheaded the first Africa Day in the institutional calendar which was addressed by leading legal minds, i.e. retired Judge Yvonne Mokgoro and Adv. George Bizos. They delivered a Public Lecture under the theme "Inculcating Human Rights Culture as a Construct of Social Justice". We also launched our first quarterly newsletter i.e. Social Justice and Transformation News, of which this is our fourth and last edition for the year. The objectives of this newsletter include: raising awareness about the role of the Social Justice and Transformation Unit amongst internal and external publics, sharing information on broad social justice and transformation as well as updating the VUT community on developments within the post school education and training sector. This quarterly newsletter is also available on the Social Justice and Transformation webpage ([www.vut.ac.za/social-justiceand-transformation](http://www.vut.ac.za/social-justiceand-transformation)).

Another first was to appoint the first person with disability (blind) in the history of the Vaal University of Technology. We also hosted the inaugural Social Justice and Transformation seminar series, which was addressed by Prof. Gordon Zide, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Governance and Organisational Transformation. He spoke on the topic: Oral Tradition as a Tool for Social Cohesion and Conscientisation of Self. This was followed by the first Employment Equity Public Lecture, which was addressed by two guest speakers, Dr Annelie Gildenhuys, Commissioner, Commission for Employment Equity and Mr Jan Munnik, MD: EES Siyakha. They spoke on the topic: EAP as Tool for Advancing Employment Equity versus Higher Education statistical data pools as an alternative.

We also created opportunities for three student interns 2 from Public Relations who assist with various activities including this newsletter under the able guidance and mentorship of staff.

One of the PR students was involved with an exciting project of documenting a chronology of leading anti-apartheid women which was showcased during our first Gender Summit as part of the Higher Education South Africa's national Common campaign Day held under the theme "The Constitutional Right to Equality". We also hosted our first photo voices exhibition of international and local student's views on xenophobia as part of VUT's stance against xenophobia.

We end this year having held a very successful strategy planning

workshop where we reflected on our transformation "barometer" of working towards institutionalising transformation within the university. All in all during this year we forged external stakeholder engagement which ranged from national departments, such as Department of Arts and Culture, the Presidency, NGOs such as Letsema, Vaal Disability Forum not to mention sister Universities in which we also conducted benchmark studies. We are very excited that the construction of the Disability Services Unit is currently underway. We are very chuffed by the fact that Social Justice and Transformation's visibility amongst internal and external stakeholders has significantly improved. We now can boast a full suite of marketing products ranging from banners, brochures to web page and this quarterly newsletter.

Our influence is steadily growing internally as the Social Justice and Transformation Unit is represented in the Senior Management Forum (SMF) and other critical committees charged with mainstreaming transformation such as the Transformation Forum, a sub-committee of the Executive Management Committee and Employment Equity Diversity Committee. We also played a role in the profiling of student food insecurity on our campuses. The year 2016 promises to be another bumper year for the Social Justice and Transformation Unit. Well done the Social Justice and Transformation Team, go and recharge your batteries, come back re-energised. HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

### 1. SECOND HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION SUMMIT, 15 OCTOBER 2015

South African public universities are expected to implement higher education policies and legislation which also include transformation. The Department of Higher Education and Training convened the second Higher Education Transformation Summit which was held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, Durban.

The summit was addressed by the Deputy President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa who gave the following marching orders:

- Access to higher education should be a right not a privilege.
- Student fees need to be affordable to allow for greater access for the poor, working class and even middle class families.
- We need to ensure universities have sufficient resources to give these students the quality they need and deserve and produce the research that the country expects.
- We must be greatly concerned that the participation of African students in higher education remains low (participation rate of African students in HE is less than 15%).

The second Higher Education Summit was organised against the backdrop of the #FEES-MUST FALL MOVEMENT, where student delegates placed the demands of students squarely on the agenda of the summit.

The Summit was attended by over 400 delegates from the post school education system including Universities, Colleges, CHE, NSFAS, Universities SA, Transformation Oversight Committee etc. Universities were represented by; inter alia, Vice-Chancellors, Council Members, Registrars and Transformation Officers. The second higher education summit held from 15-17 October was hosted by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande. The summit, comes five years after the first Higher Education Stakeholder Summit which was held on 21-22 April 2010 at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville Campus.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AWARDS , 15 OCTOBER 2015



**L to R: Mr Ramafoko VUT Driver, EE Practitioner Mr Victor Mashilwane, Mr Dutch Matlaletsa, NEHAWU representative**

The Vaal University of Technology participated in the inaugural Employment Equity Awards hosted by the Commission for Employment Equity in collaboration with the Department of Labour. All designated employers had an opportunity to participate. VUT was one of only three universities which participated in the EE awards.

Aims of the Employment Equity Awards.

- Seek to recognise the achievements of employers in furthering the purpose of the Act.
- Identify employers that excel in capturing the true spirit of transformation.
- Recognise employers who excel in developing and implementing strategies for promoting equal opportunity, diversity and fair treatment in employment.
- Elimination of unfair discrimination; implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantage in employment experienced by designated groups.
- Ensuring that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational levels in the workplace; and
- Transforming the workplace to achieve employment equity and diversity

The event took place at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, was an important learning curve and plans are underway to conduct a benchmark visit to the winners of the various awards.

## 3. WITS DIASABILITY RIGHTS HISTORY WORKSHOP, 09 November 2015

The workshop was held at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The purpose of the workshop was to encourage people with disabilities to write their own stories so that they can also be recognised as this will assist them to reach their dreams. Later the same evening we attended a Public Lecture on the topic "Historical struggles for liberation rights: inspiring action for equality". Some of the issues dealt with were, advancement of gender equality in the disability rights struggle,

the role and actions of Friday Mavuso in the formation of SHAP. The point of departure in deliberations was an emphasis on the fact that transformation inclusive of issues such as disability inclusivity needs to be part of the government's agenda. The Vaal University of Technology was represented by a delegation from Social Justice and Transformation, Community Engagement, Motor Fleet and Student Counselling and Support.



**Vaal university of Technology staff delegation at the University of Witwatersrand**

## 4. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PUBLIC LECTURE, 17 NOVEMBER 2015



**Dr Anneline Gildenhuys: Commissioner for Employment Equity**

The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (as amended) requires the Vaal University of Technology, to ensure equitable and fair employment practices for designated groups in all occupational levels. As part of developing the successive employment equity plan the Social Justice and Transformation Unit organised a public lecture on employment equity. The public lecture which was attended by more than 50 staff members was addressed by two guest speakers on the topic "EAP as a tool for advancing Employment Equity versus Higher Education statistical data pool as an alternative. One of the guest speakers, Mr. Jan Munnik, MD, EES-Siyakha indicated that the purpose of chapter 3 the Employment Equity Act, is to "redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by people from designated groups so as to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workplace, by implementing affirmative action measures". The other guest speaker was Dr Anneline Gildenhuys, Commissioner, Commission for Employment Equity also addressed the audience gathered at the foyer of the Desmond Tutu Great Hall.

## 5. INFORMATION DAY, 03 DECEMBER 2015

The Social Justice and Transformation department hosted an Information Day which was held at the Desmond Tutu foyer. The purpose of the event was to inform students and staff members about the services the Unit provides among internal stakeholders, especially the students. The people who attended the event received Social Justice and Transformation newsletters, brochures and squeeze bottles as an appreciation from the department. There was a positive response from both staff and students. The event was an initiative of the student PR interns, viz; Princess Shongwe and Tumi Mohasoa.