



FROM DIRECTORS DESK

Welcome back and great wishes for the New Year! We hope you enjoyed the recess and have come back energised to tackle the demands of the year ahead. The 2016 academic year is pregnant with various exciting developments on the university calendar. To start with, during 2016 we will celebrate 50 years of the existence of what is now called the Vaal University of Technology, an institution whose very existence is a classic case of organisational transformation. That the institution started in 1966 with 189 white students and currently has over 17 500 predominantly black registered students is indicative of widening access over the years.

In future issues we will also share with you the milestones of the Social Justice and Transformation Division as part of the 50th anniversary. For the Social Justice and Transformation Division we are starting this year full of zest and a spring in our step as our scope has now been extended to provide leadership for both students and staff as far as disability issues are concerned. This is a responsibility we do not take lightly as it places on our shoulders the institutional commitment to drive the redress agenda for this under-represented demographic group.

To this end, we begin this year by welcoming a new staff member to the Social Justice and Transformation Division, Mr David Nkwenkwezi, Disability Services Coordinator - we are looking forward to his contribution and insights in driving the disability agenda across all university campuses. We are also starting the New Year with clear goals in line with Social Justice and Transformation Division's strategic plan including implementing the university successive five year employment equity plan, aligning the policy on people with disabilities with the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (December, 2015) and finalising the strategy for people with disabilities. This blue print sets out how the universities three missions i.e. teaching, research and community engagement are to be underpinned by the transformation imperatives in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. We are also in the final process of getting the university transformation roadmap i.e. Integrated Transformation Plan approved by the university Council.

In this first issue of our quarterly newsletter you will get to know some of the activities we are involved with such as the benchmark exercises on the employment equity front, collaboration with external stakeholders on the Substance and Drug Abuse Campaign within the Vaal region, as well as a Human Rights Public Lecture. We hope you will find our first issue quite informative. Enjoy the read.

1. DISABILITY SERVICES



L to R: Social Justice and Transformation Director; Mr George Mvalo, Disability Services Coordinator, Mr David Nkwenkwezi and Mr Mike Khuboni, Executive Director: Corporate Affairs

One of the capital projects to be completed during VUT's 50th anniversary is the construction of the Disability Services Unit. The Disability Services Unit which falls under the Social Justice and Transformation Division has the responsibility to coordinate disability services for both students and staff in all university campuses. From the beginning of this year, the Social Justice and Transformation Division has been joined by Mr David Nkwenkwezi, in the new position of Disability Services Coordinator, Mr Nkwenkwezi who is blind has already hit the road running by meeting with various internal stakeholders to discuss issues ranging from exams concession to reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Some of the strategic issues he will be focusing on include, forming strategic partnerships with special schools and external (dis)ability organisations, advocacy and awareness, providing accessible texts, assistive devices and reasonable accommodations to students and staff with disabilities, monitoring the implementation of the roll out of the disability audit and provide quarterly reports to the Disability Forum.

2. DISPLAYING OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY WALL CHARTS, 26 JANUARY 2016



VUT delegation along with Mr Vido Kungune, Campus Acting Principal, Ekurhuleni Campus

Another critical function of the Social Justice and Transformation Division is employment equity. This entails the responsibility to develop, implement and monitor institutional and departmental Employment Equity Plans with the end goal of ensuring equitable and representative employment of designated groups in all occupational levels. This is done in line with the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (as amended). Due to the amendment of the Employment Equity Act in August 2014, it became necessary to raise awareness about the amendments to the university community in all campuses. The Employment Equity Practitioner travelled to Secunda campus (Mpumalanga) and Ekurhuleni campus (Daveyton) to display the summary of the amended Employment Equity Act. The purpose of displaying the charts is to raise employee and line management awareness about the contents and applications of changes to the Employment Equity Act. The wall charts have also been displayed in departments in the main campus. The displays are in line with clauses 7.2.1 and 7.2.4 of the Code of Good Practice. The summaries will also be placed on the Social Justice and Transformation Division web page for ease of reference.

3. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY STAFF TRAINING, 18 FEBRUARY 2016 Princess Shongwe

In line with the amendments to the Employment Equity Act, the Social Justice and Transformation Division hosted an Employment Equity training for staff which was held at the Science and Tech-

nology Park campus, Sebokeng. The staff of Vaal University of Technology got insights into a wide range of areas including: perspectives on equity and diversity, Employment Equity Act Amendments, related equity, equality and diversity legislation, and codes of good practice for employment equity.



VUT delegates that formed part of EE staff Training at Science Park Campus

The purpose of the employment equity training was part of an awareness campaign to ensure that all employees have knowledge of the Employment Equity Act and its amendments. The training workshop which was well received by staff was facilitated by Bathokwa People Solutions and Focus Consulting.

4. FIRST EMPLOYMENT EQUITY BENCHMARKING, 23 FEBRUARY 2016



The Social Justice and Transformation delegates at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mpumalanga

The Vaal University of Technology was one of three universities which participated in the inaugural Employment Equity Awards hosted by the Department of Labour and the Commission for Employment Equity in October 2015. The Employment Equity Awards were given to organisations "that excel in advancing the true spirit of transformation, by implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment; promoting equal opportunity, diversity and fair treatment in employment and elimination of unfair discrimination; ensuring that suitably qualified people from designated group, equal employment opportunities and have equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workplace and those transforming the workplace to achieve employment equity and diversity". One of the first EE awards winners to be visited is the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mpumalanga. It was recognised for winning a special award recognising innovation and special projects in dealing with disability in the workplace.

5. SUBSTANCE AND DRUGS ABUSE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN, 26 FEBRUARY 2016

One of the scourges of the 21st century is the prevalence of drugs in our communities and their devastating impact particularly on the youth who are the inheritors of the future. Universities are not immune from the drug menace and it's debilitating psycho-social effects. The Vaal University of Technology played a key role in organising and hosting the Anti- Substance and Drug Abuse Campaign which took place at the Desmond Tutu Great Hall on 26 February. Topics for the day ranged from substance abuse, drugs status quo in Sedibeng to prosecutions and convictions. The Vaal University of Technology was privileged to host the event in collaboration with Emfuleni Local Municipality, Sedibeng District Municipality, Gauteng Community Safety, SAPS, SANCA, Gauteng Basic Education, Gauteng Department of Social Development,

SANCA and Community Safety Forum. The event was also attended by learners from neighbouring schools, community members, students and victims of drug abuse who shared their testimonies with the audience.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS PUBLIC LECTURE, 10 MARCH 2016



L to R: Guest speaker; Dr Siphamandla Zondi, Social Justice and Transformation Director; Mr George Mvalo, Director: Special Projects, Mr Mpho Diago

The year started with a heightened sense of outrage about racist statements made on social media against black people. As part of the national Human Rights Month celebrations taking place across the country, we hosted a Public Lecture addressed by Dr Siphamandla Zondi, the Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue based at the University of South Africa on the theme "Racism, not in my name". Dr Zondi spoke extensively on a range of issues ranging from the racist rants of Penny Sparrow on social media, which he likened to a symbol of a dialogue of the deaf, - UFS Reitz incident - UP white students who painted their faces black - killing of African-Americans in the USA- killings of negroid Africans after the killing of Gaddafi in Libya to the #Student Movements. He described the Rhodes statue as "a symbol of suffocating presence and a yearning by students to breathe freely where they are studying". Speaking on curriculum transformation and the decolonisation project, he opined that the debate "is spoken in metaphors not many fully understand".

The Public Lecture which was well attended by students, academics, staff and members of the public was followed by a panel discussion which included speakers from the Sedibeng District Municipality and Emfuleni Local Municipality. The Public Lecture was held at the Desmond Tutu Great Hall in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture.

7. SECOND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY BENCHMARKING, PICK N PAY, 18 MARCH 2016

Three members of Employment Equity and Diversity Committee visited the Head Office of Pick n Pay at Kensington in Johannesburg.

Some of the highlights of the visit were:-

- Need to publish organisational annual report to let the public know
- Dedicated training programmes for designated groups especially women i.e. Management Development Programme, MBA, RMDP, ILDP, IT, Women In Leadership Programme, Graduate Development Programme
- Conduct diversity tours and diversity lunch to historic sites viz; Freedom Square, Apartheid Museum, Credo Muthwa etc.
- Diversity awareness workshops
- Dedicated employment equity resource office
- In-house publications and payslip messages

The VUT was represented by Director: Social Justice and Transformation, George Mvalo, Dutch Matlaletsa NEHAWU representative in the EEDC and EE Practitioner: Victor Mashilwane. We were hosted by Mr Vincent Mazibuko: Pick n Pay's General Manager: Organisational Development.

