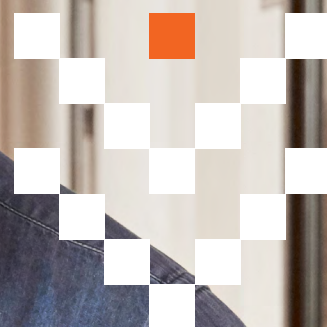




Our Future
Reimagined



INTUTHUKO

OFFICIAL UJ DEVELOPMENT AND
FUNDRAISING MAGAZINE



Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

- 54 graduation sessions this season
- Over 12 000 graduates
- Over 7,500 undergraduate degrees, as well as postgraduate degrees
- Over 200 Master's and
- Over 100 Doctoral degrees

Each graduate's success is not only a personal triumph but also a significant milestone towards improving the lives of their families, communities, and society at large.

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Editorial Team



Ms Daphney Nemakhavhani



Ms Thuli Hlabahlab

This Intuthuko magazine edition is co-edited by Dr Dawn Isabel Nagar, (from the Development and Fundraising Office). We acknowledge the University of Johannesburg's Faculties' support as well as the UJ Graphic Studio's support for graphics, design and layout.

UJ Convocation

is the official interface between UJ and its alumni and the primary channel for UJ Alumni to pass their opinions to the University for consideration.

The Institutional Statute of UJ determines that the membership of the Convocation consists of:

- Alumni (diplomates and graduates of formal subsidised qualifications from the University of Johannesburg, the former Rand Afrikaans University and the former Technikon Witwatersrand)
- The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and other members of the Management Executive Committee of the University;
- Permanent academic employees of the University;
- Retired permanent academic employees of the University.

There are various mechanisms through which Convocation discharges its mandate:

- The Executive Committee of Convocation meets annually to discuss University matters, changes affecting UJ alumni and to develop approved responses;
- The Annual Meeting of Convocation (AGM) is open to all members of Convocation;
- The Executive Committee of Convocation receives reports from the University, then discusses and agrees on opinions and resolutions to be passed on to the University;
- The Convocation is a legally constituted body that concerns itself with key issues of concern to alumni.

Join us at the upcoming Convocation AGM, more details to follow.

SCAN ME



FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

As we wrapped up the 2024 first semester, our University had the privilege of hosting some distinguished guests from international universities and governmental bodies for a series of significant events recently. One of these notable events was the commemoration of 30 years of democracy in South Africa, organised by our University in partnership with the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa. The event was held at our Soweto Campus, and it aimed to spotlight

the growing relationship between Canada and South Africa, particularly emphasising Canada's role in fostering youth development through an expanded partnership.

Additionally, the institution has been awarded a €400,000 (approximately R8.1 million) grant by the European Union (EU) to lead a digital transformation initiative, aimed at improving Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. This initiative is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme under Capacity Building in Higher Education. The project, led by Ms. Rachel Khoza (project coordinator), Mr. Kgabo Masehela, Ms. Lonah Mbhalati and Mr. Kabelo Morake from the Department of Commercial Accounting, as well as Prof Tankiso Moloi Director: Academic at JBS, reflects UJ's commitment to creating positive societal impact through innovative educational initiatives.



THE INSTITUTION HAS BEEN AWARDED APPROXIMATELY R8.1 MILLION GRANT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) TO LEAD A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE , AIMED AT IMPROVING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

On the note of celebrating excellence, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our esteemed colleague, Ms. Miemie Geya, Director of the Centre for Student Health and Wellness on her appointment as a Council member of the Lebone College of Emergency Care by the Gauteng Provincial Health Department. This well-deserved appointment spans a period of three years, reflecting Sister Miemie's dedication and contributions to her field. Well done, Sister Miemie! Your achievements are truly commendable!

Furthermore, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate brand and marketing leader Dr Thebe Ikalafeng, who was bestowed an Honorary Doctorate during a graduation ceremony held 19 March 2024. Dr. Thebe Ikalafeng is a deep-rooted believer in the richness of Africa's diverse cultures, histories, and talents, who has tirelessly championed initiatives aimed at showcasing the continent's true essence on a global stage. These are indeed the values of excellence, leadership, and service that are the cornerstones of UJ. In closing, it is such an honour to share with you that the University is set to graduate more than 12,000 students in the upcoming graduation sessions. These remarkable individuals will be receiving over 7,500 undergraduate degrees, as well as postgraduate degrees, including 250 Master's and 101 Doctoral degrees. Each graduate's success is not only a personal triumph, but also a significant milestone towards improving the lives of their families, communities, and society at large. ■

Chief Financial Officer
Ms Nlwazi Mamorare

FOREWORD FROM DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR: MS DAPHNEY NEMAKHAVHANI

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you to the 2024 first edition of our Intuthuko Magazine. I am thrilled to share with you the stories of progress, achievement, and transformation that have unfolded within our institution during the first quarter of 2024.

We are thrilled to share with you the tangible results of your generous support and philanthropy. The stories within these pages are a testament to the power of education and the positive impact it can have on individuals and communities.

From groundbreaking research initiatives to life-changing scholarships, each story exemplifies the transformative impact of your continued dedication to our mission. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and all that you do to help us reach new heights of excellence.

Through this newsletter, we aim to inspire, inform, and engage you in our ongoing efforts to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and the communities we serve. Together, we are building a brighter future for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support. We hope you enjoy this glimpse into the transformative impact of your generosity. ■

Director: Development and Fundraising Office
Ms Daphney Nemakhavhani



In a pioneering move, Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg (UJ), alongside his family, has initiated the Mpedi Neurodiversity Studies Scholarship with a groundbreaking donation of R250 000,00. This innovative scholarship, unveiled on 4 March 2024, signifies a profound commitment to advancing inclusive research and addressing the unique challenges encountered by individuals with neurodiverse conditions. Aimed at bolstering the ranks of professionals in this field, the scholarship will support students pursuing master's studies with a focus on the neurodevelopmental learning needs of children and youth.

Under the stewardship of Professor Maximus Monaheng Sefotho, the Centre for Neurodiversity at UJ is spearheading this scholarship, focusing on research concerning the neurodevelopmental learning needs of children and youth, particularly the health and well-being of children with



Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal

UJ INTRODUCES MPEDI NEURODIVERSITY STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP: CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVE RESEARCH FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH NEURODIVERSE CONDITIONS.



Down Syndrome. The Mpedi family's initiative underscores their dedication to reshaping societal perspectives on neurodiversity and affirms the importance of addressing the educational needs of children with neurodiverse learning requirements, through understanding and inclusivity.

The Mpedi Neurodiversity Studies Scholarship transcends conventional financial aid programmes. It catalyses the Centre for Neurodiversity to tackle global challenges in the neurodiversity field and facilitate research that contributes to a more inclusive and understanding society. Drawing from his personal journey as a parent of a neurodivergent

child, Prof. Mpedi advocates for embracing neurodiversity to create a more supportive and nurturing society. He stresses the importance of legal systems safeguarding the rights of neurodivergent individuals, and fostering environments that acknowledge and celebrate their unique perspectives and capabilities. The launch of the Mpedi Neurodiversity Studies Scholarship heralds the dawn of an inclusive research landscape within the Centre for Neurodiversity@UJ. UJ envisions a future where this scholarship serves as a beacon for inclusive research, dismantling barriers, and fostering a global community, dedicated to understanding and embracing neurodiversity. ■

NEW CENTRE FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ACCELERATES 4IR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA



Mr Yershen Pillay, CEO of CHIETA

OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IS EQUIPPING THE YOUTH WITH ESSENTIAL 4IR AND DIGITAL SKILLS TO FUTURE-PROOF CAREERS AND DRIVE THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

global leader in digital transformation, aligning closely with national development objectives," Prof Telukdarie said.

In addition, Mr Yershen Pillay, CEO of CHIETA, added that the new impactful partnership is to cultivate more doctoral graduates, thereby fortifying South Africa's research economy and fostering innovation. "This initiative will go a long way in bridging the global digital innovation divide. We are proud to collaborate with an institution that produces more research outputs than any other university in the country. We look forward to the new transformation initiatives on skills development and sustainable livelihoods from this Centre," said Pillay.

The CHIETA/UJ JBS Centre for Digital Transformation will focus on research objectives that include Virtual Reality, Business Intelligence, Skills Forecasting, Grants Management Systems, Business Process, Skills Development, TVET, Rural Development and SME among others.

With this addition, the University now boasts an impressive array of more than 70 research centres, 26 SARCHI and Industry Chairs, and hosts over 301 NRF-rated researchers.

Mrs. Nolwazi Mamorare, the Chief Financial Officer at UJ, highlighted the importance of adapting and embracing the transformative power of digital technologies. "This occasion stands testament to the enduring commitment of UJ towards innovation, education and the advancement of knowledge. The establishment of this groundbreaking Centre symbolises our unwavering commitment and dedication to staying at the forefront of technological evolution and advancement."

The Centre is also aimed at growing the research outputs of both CHIETA and UJ and represents a nexus where academia and industry converge to shape the future of digital transformation.

She continued: "This is particularly important to UJ towards our own strategic objectives. UJ has been recognised, by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)'s sector Report on the Evaluation of the 2022 Universities' Research Outputs, released earlier in 2024, as the leading producer of accredited research outputs in South Africa. With initiatives such as this, I have no doubt this trend will continue. Research is a cornerstone of any university, and a truly reputable institution prioritises it." ■



Mrs. Nolwazi Mamorare, the Chief Financial Officer at UJ

UJ's Johannesburg Business School (JBS) and the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA) have joined forces in an innovative research project to address the critical skills development needs of the nation.

This partnership aims to enhance research capabilities and foster innovation, ensuring both short and long-term solutions in a country where skills shortage is stark.

At the core of this collaboration is the establishment of the CHIETA/UJ JBS Centre for Digital Transformation, backed by the CHIETA Research Chair's substantial investment of R5 million. This initiative highlights the steadfast commitment of UJ and CHIETA to spearhead digital transformation efforts across South Africa, marking its official launch on Tuesday, April 16th, 2024.

Arnesh Telukdarie, a Professor of Digital Business at UJ, and head of the Centre, highlighted the Centre's mission, stating, "We aim to accelerate digitalisation within the chemicals sector by providing support and fostering rural and peri-urban development, while also aiding large and medium-sized businesses." He pointed out that while the Centre's primary focus is on the chemical sector, its impact is set to extend to broader economic sectors in South Africa. "Our overarching goal is to position South Africa as a



Dr Cayle Lupton
Senior Lecturer and Director of the Centre of Banking Law

DR. CAYLE LUPTON APPOINTED AS CHAIR OF BANKING COMMISSION AT JOHANNESBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

BY FOSTERING A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE IDEAS ARE EXCHANGED AND CHALLENGES ARE ADDRESSED PROACTIVELY, THE COMMISSION SEEKS TO PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF BANKING

Dr. Cayle Lupton has been appointed as the Chair of the Banking Commission of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He is a Senior Lecturer and also the Director of the Centre of Banking Law. The Banking Commission is a crucial national committee that operates under the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) located in Paris. It plays an important role in shaping banking law and policy in South Africa. The Commission is made up of representatives from major banks and financial institutions

across the country. Its main focus is to provide insights and recommendations on various trade finance developments, as well as address national and international challenges that impact the banking sector and the broader business landscape.

Dr. Lupton will lead the Commission in its efforts to facilitate collaboration among members to effectively address key issues facing the banking industry. His wealth of experience and expertise in banking law, coupled with his leadership acumen, makes him well-positioned to guide the Commission in its mission to contribute positively to the development of banking law, policy, and practice in South Africa. The Chamber's commitment to fostering dialogue and innovation within the banking sector is reflected in Dr. Lupton's appointment. This commitment will ultimately drive sustainable growth and prosperity for businesses across the nation.

The Banking Commission, under Dr. Lupton's leadership, aims to enhance its engagement with stakeholders to ensure that banking regulations and practices align with the evolving needs of the business community. By fostering a collaborative environment where ideas are exchanged and challenges are addressed proactively, the Commission seeks to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of banking in South Africa. With Dr. Lupton at the helm, the Commission is poised to navigate complex regulatory landscapes and drive meaningful change that promotes a thriving and resilient banking sector in the country. ■



Prof Sarah Gravett, Kenneth Baloyi, and student-teachers in the makerspace

TEACHING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT MAKING AS A PEDAGOGY UTILISING A MAKERSPACE AT THE FUNDA UJABULE SCHOOL ON THE SOWETO CAMPUS

In 2022, the Department of Childhood Education at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) partnered with the Gauteng Department of Education to create a makerspace at Funda Ujabule Primary School (FUJS) on the Soweto Campus. FUJS is a “teaching school” that functions similarly to teaching hospitals for training health practitioners. The makerspace officially opened on 14 April 2023, and is equipped with resources such as LEGO robotics kits, tinkering tools, textiles, and recyclable materials. It is used to educate pre-service teachers on maker-based learning and serves the students of FUJS.

Makerspaces are collaborative environments that encourage students to create meaningful, shareable projects. They are designed to foster creativity and innovation and offer

flexible learning environments that enable interdisciplinary connections across subjects. Makerspaces are essential in educational settings such as schools and universities. In the makerspace at FUJS, student teachers engage in hands-on and minds-on activities, learning through making and tinkering.

Prof. Sarah Gravett, the acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Internationalisation and a professor of teacher education and development at UJ, is leading research initiatives related to maker-based initial teacher education. Kenneth Baloyi, a staff member and PhD student, and Fisokuhle Mazibuko, a master’s student, are conducting research on making as a pedagogy that involves pre-service teachers. ■



Student-teachers working on robotics projects using Spike Prime robotics kits and recyclable materials.



Student-teachers working on artefacts using Lego and recyclable materials

The research initiatives are based on a course that was designed to equip pre-service teachers with the skills to integrate making as pedagogy, using the FUJS makerspace. The course spans five weeks and blends online and in-person elements within the makerspace environment. The course is rooted in principles derived from the literature on significant learning, understanding by design, and the science of learning. It incorporates hands-on activities, online resources, and assessments to deepen student teachers' understanding of how making enhances learning.

To sum it up, the research initiatives stem from a course that was specifically crafted to utilise the FUJS makerspace in training pre-service teachers on integrating making into pedagogy. The course, spanning five weeks, combines online and in-person components within the makerspace setting. It draws on principles of significant learning, understanding by design, and the science of learning literature. The course incorporates hands-on activities, online resources, and assessments to deepen student teachers' comprehension of how making enriches learning.

Kenneth's Ph.D. research focuses on establishing design principles for developing and implementing a course on making as pedagogy. This course aims to equip pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to seamlessly integrate making into their teaching practices. Kenneth employs practitioner action research methods, including qualitative tools such as field notes, questionnaires, portfolios, reflections, and interviews. The study aims to provide valuable insights into integrating the pedagogy of making and makerspaces into teacher education programmes.

Fisokuhle's study aims to explore what pre-service teachers learn in a course about making as a pedagogy and what they find significant to incorporate into their teaching.

Preliminary findings from both studies suggest that student teachers gained an understanding of making as a pedagogical approach and expressed intentions to incorporate it into their teaching. The second iteration of the course, scheduled for implementation in 2024, will be enhanced, based on insights gained from the first iteration.

By Mr Kenneth Baloyi and Prof Sarah Gravett ■



Fisokuhle Mazibuko with Dr Phumzile Mlambo Ncuka during a Chancellor visit to the makerspace.

MAKERSPACES ARE COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO CREATE MEANINGFUL, SHAREABLE PROJECTS. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO FOSTER CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AND OFFER FLEXIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENABLE INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS ACROSS SUBJECTS



Picture courtesy IOL

UNVEILING THE POWER OF FUNCTIONAL NEAR-INFRARED SPECTROSCOPY (FNIRS) IN BRAIN RESEARCH

SARCHI Chair of Integrated Studies of learning language science and mathematics in the primary school, is home to a number of research projects on child development and learning, as well as teacher education for the primary school. The main programme of research is early reading and primary school mathematics and science learning. The recent additions to the research portfolio is research on Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS).

fNIRS is an optical, non-invasive neuroimaging technique that allows the measurement of brain tissue concentration changes of oxygenated (HbO₂) and deoxygenated (HbR) hemoglobin following neuronal activation. The innovative technology is transforming brain research by providing scientists with real-time data on brain activity. It uses near-infrared light to measure changes in blood oxygenation levels in the brain, providing a non-invasive and portable method for monitoring brain function. By harnessing the power of fNIRS, researchers can better understand cognitive processes, emotions, and behaviours, leading to groundbreaking discoveries in neuroscience.

LOOKING AHEAD, FNIRS HOLDS IMMENSE PROMISE FOR UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE HUMAN BRAIN. ITS NON-INVASIVE NATURE, PORTABILITY, AND ABILITY TO MEASURE BRAIN ACTIVITY IN REAL-TIME MAKE IT A VERSATILE TOOL FOR STUDYING BRAIN FUNCTION ACROSS DIVERSE POPULATIONS AND CONTEXTS.

One of the most exciting applications of fNIRS technology is its potential to enhance learning outcomes. Studies have shown that fNIRS can be used to monitor brain activity during learning tasks, allowing educators to identify optimal learning strategies and tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Additionally, fNIRS can help detect early signs of learning difficulties, enabling educators to provide timely interventions and personalised support strategies to foster academic success.

Mathematics anxiety is a common phenomenon that can hinder learning and performance in mathematical tasks. However, recent fNIRS research is shedding light on the underlying neural mechanisms of math anxiety, offering hope for effective interventions. By analysing brain activity patterns in individuals with math anxiety, researchers can identify specific neural markers associated with this condition. This knowledge can be used by educators and mental health professionals to develop targeted interventions to alleviate math anxiety and promote math confidence.

Looking ahead, fNIRS holds immense promise for unlocking the mysteries of the human brain. Its non-invasive nature, portability, and ability to measure brain activity in real-time make it a versatile tool for studying brain function across diverse populations and contexts.

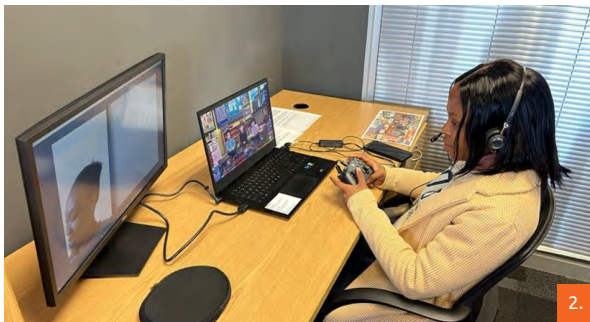
From unravelling the neural basis of complex cognitive processes to investigating neurological disorders, fNIRS is poised to revolutionise our understanding of the brain and pave the way for innovative therapeutic interventions. ■

MIXED REALITY SIMULATION (MRS) IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROJECT



1.

In a groundbreaking initiative, the Department of Childhood Education (DCE) is spearheading a project that harnesses the power of Mixed Reality Simulation (MRS) to revolutionise pre-service teacher education. This innovative approach integrates immersive virtual environments with real-time puppetry, utilising a human-in-the-loop (HITL) model to create lifelike scenarios for student teachers. Under the leadership of Prof Sarah Gravett and project manager Dr Dean van der Merwe, the DCE is pioneering the use of MRS to enhance teaching and classroom management skills among aspiring educators.



2.

THE JOURNEY INTO MRS BEGAN IN 2022 WHEN THE DCE INITIATED A PILOT PROJECT INVOLVING 15 FINAL-YEAR STUDENT TEACHERS. LEVERAGING THE TEACHLIVE™ PLATFORM, STUDENT TEACHERS ENGAGED WITH COMPUTER-CONTROLLED AVATARS, ALLOWING THEM TO PRACTICE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND REFINE THEIR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES IN A SIMULATED ENVIRONMENT.



3.

Building upon this initial success, the project expanded in 2023 with funding from UJ, enabling the DCE to integrate MRS into third-year foundation and intermediate-phase modules. Through collaboration with Mursion™, the DCE trained its own simulation specialists to facilitate MRS sessions, further enhancing the programme's effectiveness and sustainability.



4.

Central to the success of the MRS project are the coaches who provide invaluable real-time feedback to student teachers during and after each simulation session. Through reflective sessions led by coaches, student teachers have the opportunity to analyse their performance, receive peer feedback, and enhance their teaching skills. Already, evidence of the benefits of MRS is emerging, with observed improvements in questioning techniques and self-efficacy among student teachers. Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, the DCE is committed to expanding the integration of MRS into additional modules, guided by ongoing research and the collective expertise of dedicated staff members. With Prof Gravett, Dr van der Merwe, and their team at the helm, the DCE is paving the way for a new era in pre-service teacher education, where innovation and technology converge to shape the educators of tomorrow. (UCF). ■

1. TeachLive avatars
2. Tlhalefo Mathope (sim specialist) conducting a mixed reality simulation
3. Ofentse Nkale (sim specialist) conducting a mixed reality simulation
4. Staff members at an MRS project meeting

COLLABORATIVE ONLINE PROJECT EXPLORES 'GREEN PEDAGOGIES' FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

In our ever-evolving world, the role of education in promoting sustainability and advancing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), cannot be overstated. As we prepare students to navigate a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world, universities must shift their focus from mere learning to lifelong learning, embedding sustainability principles into every aspect of education.

AT THE HEART OF THIS PARADIGM SHIFT LIES INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL METHODS AIMED AT PREPARING FUTURE GENERATIONS TO BECOME CREATORS OF A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD. THIS ENTAILS MOVING BEYOND TRADITIONAL LEARNING APPROACHES AND EMBRACING TRANSGRESSIVE AND DISRUPTIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGIES.

One such innovative approach is Green Pedagogy, a practical and implementable framework designed to instil a strong sustainability mindset in students.

In a groundbreaking project funded by SASUF, UJ collaborated with Lund and Orebro Universities in Sweden, the University of Fort Hare, and the University of Limpopo in South Africa. This project focused on experimenting with green pedagogies to embed sustainability as a core orientation in existing university modules. Through a series of pedagogical experiments, students were provided with online opportunities to learn from and with one another while applying their knowledge of sustainability within a meaningful real-life context. This project not only aims to raise awareness of the SDGs but also to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among students.

One remarkable example of the project's impact is Ms. Luhlima, a UJ DELM student, whose digital story showcased her efforts in integrating sustainability leadership at a TVET college in Vhembe, through a campus beekeeping project. This project addressed several SDGs, including Life on Land (SDG 15), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), and Quality Education (SDG 4).

Through collaborative efforts between Swedish and South African lecturers, this project has affirmed a possible pathway for integrating sustainability imperatives into existing university modules. Furthermore, it has offered Africa a voice in the SDG conversation, addressing concerns about the Western-centric nature of the goals and promoting equitable development models.

As we continue to explore innovative approaches to education for sustainability, UJ is inspired by the transformative impact of this project and believes that we are paving the way for a more sustainable future, one student at a time.

By Prof Kat Yassim ■

Since 2022, we've raised over R9.2 million,
transforming lives through education.
Support our Double Our Future Impact Campaign.
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<https://uj.devman.co.za/devman/online/futurecampaign>

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: UJ HONOURS DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS **WITH HONORARY DOCTORATES IN AUTUMN AND WINTER GRADUATION SERIES**

In a testament to outstanding achievement and remarkable contributions, UJ bestowed honorary doctorates upon distinguished individuals during its autumn and winter graduation series. These prestigious awards recognise exceptional leadership and service that transcend conventional norms, honouring recipients who have left an indelible mark in their respective fields. These individuals exemplify excellence, innovation, and societal impact. The recipients of honorary doctorates include:

Mr. Thebe Ikalafeng – Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa)

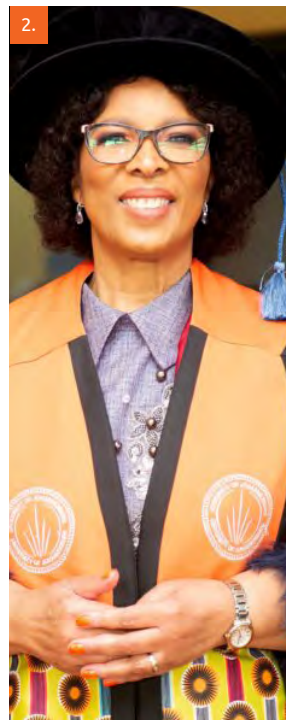
A seasoned leader in branding and marketing communications, Mr. Ikalafeng's illustrious career spanning over three decades, has been marked by numerous accolades and awards. His commitment to nurturing talent and promoting African brands underscores his role as a thought leader and mentor.

(Image 1: Dr Thebe Ikalafeng and Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi)



Ms. Nonkululeko Gobodo – Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa)

Celebrated as a trailblazer in the South African business and accounting professions, Ms. Gobodo's journey from becoming the first black female Chartered Accountant in South Africa to her current role exemplifies resilience, excellence, and commitment to societal change. (Image 2)



Prof. Raphael Kaplinsky – Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa)

Prof. Kaplinsky's distinguished record of publications and influential roles in academia reflect his commitment to capacity development and interdisciplinary research. His pioneering work on Global Value Chains (GVCs) and sustainable development practices has left an indelible mark on scholarship and policy. (Image 3)



Prof. Huang Wei – Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa)

A distinguished scholar and scientist, Prof. Wei's contributions to organic optoelectronics and flexible electronics have garnered international acclaim. His commitment to education and social service aligns with UJ's values of excellence and global collaboration, making him a deserving recipient of the honorary degree. The ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, 30 May at 09:30. (Image 4) ■

DR. KHENSANI XIVURI SHATTERS GLASS CEILING, BECOMING THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO EARN A PHD IN APPLIED DATA SCIENCE AT UJ



Dr Stella Bvuma (left) with Dr Khensani Xivuri

A momentous occasion for UJ, Thursday, 14 March 2024, witnessed the inauguration of its first graduation ceremony of the year. Amidst the jubilant atmosphere of proud graduates, one name stood out in shining brilliance: Dr. Khensani Xivuri, marking her historic milestone as the first black female recipient of a PhD in Applied Data Science from the institution.

ORIGINATING FROM THE VILLAGE OF PENINGHOTSA, MALAMULELE IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE, KHENSANI'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS WAS DEFINED BY UNWAVERING DETERMINATION AND RESILIENCE.

Her ascent serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit of pursuing dreams against all odds. Describing her doctoral experience as demanding yet exhilarating, Dr. Xivuri reminisced on nights blending into mornings, navigating the challenging balance between academia and employment. However, guided by her father's enduring wisdom in Xitsonga, "unga sunguli xilo unga xi hetisi," which underscores the principles of commitment and perseverance, she remained steadfast in her pursuit.

As the inaugural black female recipient of a PhD in Applied Data Science at UJ, Khensani's achievement transcends

individual triumph, symbolising hope and inspiration for countless others. Her profound pride in this accomplishment resonates deeply, underscoring the importance of women breaking barriers and leaving an indelible mark in STEM fields.

"It feels absolutely incredible! I'm overflowing with happiness and fulfilment. Throughout my journey, I've thrived on challenges, finding joy in pushing my limits and viewing every difficulty as an opportunity to surpass past accomplishments" said Dr. Khensani Xivuri.

Dr. Xivuri's groundbreaking research focused on developing a procedural model to identify and mitigate bias in Artificial Intelligence (AI) models before their implementation. Illustrating the implications of bias, she highlighted scenarios where flawed algorithms could unfairly impact individuals, emphasising the critical need for societal involvement in the development process. Dr. Stella Bvuma, Director of the School of Consumer Intelligence and Information Systems at UJ, hailed Dr. Xivuri's achievement as a quintessential embodiment of breaking barriers and fostering inclusivity. Her journey, reflective of UJ's commitment to diversity and academic excellence, serves as a guiding beacon for future generations.

As we celebrate Dr. Khensani Xivuri's extraordinary accomplishment, her journey stands as a powerful testament to the transformative power of perseverance and inclusivity in academia. Let her achievement serve as an enduring inspiration, illuminating the path to a future where every dream is within reach. ■

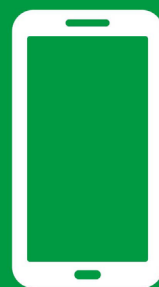
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UJ LIBRARIES LEAD THE WAY IN DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP WITH DATA VISUALISATION WALL AND VR/AR LAB INTEGRATION



THE STRATEGIC PLACEMENT OF THE DATA VISUALISATION WALL WITHIN THE LIBRARY OFFERS SEVERAL ADVANTAGES. THIS ACCESSIBILITY ENSURES THAT THE DATA VISUALISATION TOOL IS READILY AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ENDEAVOURS ACROSS DISCIPLINES.

University libraries are embracing digital scholarship by offering innovative tools to support research and teaching. At UJ, the introduction of a data visualisation wall marks a significant step towards enhancing research capabilities. Similar installations can be found in prestigious institutions worldwide, such as the University of California, San Diego, and the University of Michigan.

The strategic placement of the data visualisation wall within the library offers several advantages. Firstly, libraries serve as central hubs on university campuses, accessible to all students, faculty, and staff. This accessibility ensures that the data visualisation tool is readily available to support research endeavours across disciplines. Moreover, libraries house a wealth of resources, including data sets, books, and journals, complementing the functionality of the data visualisation wall. Trained library staff are on hand to provide research assistance and technical support, enriching the user experience.

Building upon this foundation, UJ's Library is extending its offerings with a data visualisation wall as an extension

of its Virtual Reality Lab. By integrating virtual and augmented reality technologies, researchers can interact with complex data sets in immersive environments, fostering deeper understanding and uncovering new insights. The incorporation of textual data mining software further enhances the research capabilities within the data visualisation and VR/AR space. Tools like TDM Studio extract valuable insights from unstructured textual data, enriching data-driven narratives and presentations.

Through these initiatives, UJ Libraries are at the forefront of empowering researchers to explore and communicate their findings in innovative ways, ultimately advancing digital scholarship and knowledge dissemination.

By Dr Dawn Nagar ■

THANK YOU

We are immensely grateful for your unwavering support towards the “Double Our Future Impact” campaign. Your generosity and belief in our vision have propelled us forward, bringing us closer to our shared goal of creating a brighter tomorrow for all.

With your contributions, we are not just doubling our efforts; we are doubling our impact, and we are doubling the number of futures we are changing!

Together, we’re paving the way for a future filled with possibilities, innovation, and positive change.

Give the Gift of Education: donate today to the Double our Future Impact Campaign.

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**Our Future
Reimagined**

UJ'S INITIATIVE: BUILDING SMART STUDENT CITIES FOR A SAFER FUTURE

UJ has partnered with local and national government stakeholders to create smart student cities that prioritise safety, accessibility, and affordability for all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their objective is to address infrastructural challenges and establish a conducive environment for learning.

UJ's approach is not limited to academic pursuits. They envision a smart student city that is safe, healthy, and inclusive, welcoming students from all over South Africa and beyond. The University, in collaboration with stakeholders and local government aims to create vibrant hubs of learning and innovation where all students can thrive.

This initiative aligns with global efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education and reflects the University's commitment to social justice and equal rights.

Through these partnerships, UJ is leading a transformative agenda for higher education. By prioritising the safety and well-being of students, they are not just creating smarter cities - they are laying the foundation for a brighter and more equitable future.

By Dr Dawn Nagar ■



About University of Johannesburg Alumni Chapters

A UJ alumni chapter is a regional, town or city based group of university of Johannesburg (UJ) alumni who want to formalise their relationship with UJ. Any verified alumnus may volunteer to convene a chapter.

Chapters coordinate and provide opportunities for alumni to socialise and network. They organise their local alumni and keep them connected to UJ. The alumni chapters are the official contact with the UJ Alumni Office and UJ. Ideally convenors execute the maintenance of their respective UJ alumni chapters with the guidance of the UJ alumni chapter guidelines that the alumni office has produced. The UJ Alumni Office provides communications and administrative support to chapter convenors.

HOW TO START – VOLUNTEERING TO BE A CONVENOR

The convenor of an alumni chapter should have the following characteristics:

- Willingness to work with the University
- Willingness to contribute time
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to motivate and engage alumni

Think about what type of activities you are hoping to organize as a chapter convenor. Successful alumni chapters base their programme on a mixture of activities. Allow the opportunity for as many people as possible to contribute.

If you are looking to establishing an alumni chapter in your region, please contact the UJ alumni office on alumni@uj.ac.za

All UJ Alumni can connect with us on Alumni Connect, www.ujalumni.co.za. The alumni connect platform allows UJ Alumni to, offer mentoring services, receive mentorship and connect with UJ in a unique way and participate in UJ Alumni chapters and affinity groups.

Key activities of a chapter include but are not limited to:

- organising multiple events or activities a year to which all alumni in the region are invited
- acting as a contact point for UJ in their country or region
- offering informal advice to alumni moving into their area
- acting as a local contact point for UJ e.g. offering advice to members of staff and faculty about where to stay or hold meetings when visiting their area

SCAN ME

