

INSPIRING UFS STAFF dumela

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
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FREISTATA



JULY 2022 - ISSUE ONE



FROM THE EDITOR

Will we ever forget the winter of 2022? When, quietly and overnight, we had to face the next day – literally. No more hiding behind a mask. It was such an awkward relief. That said, it may be a good idea to have a mask handy for tight spaces and when you suspect that you may be at risk.

This was not the only good news, though. In this edition, we share some remarkable UFS stories ranging from sustainable food, gardening, solar energy, to the winning attitude of our sports stars. Speaking of achievements, we also touch base with the popular iRecognize peer-to-peer initiative – make sure to visit this platform where you can give credit where it is due.

This year will be over before you know it, with the second semester picking up speed towards the final activities of 2022. During this time, take care of your well-being to prevent the common end-of-year fatigue by making use of the support systems on our campuses. Try to maintain a balanced approach to keeping fit and focused, as our health is, after all, one of the most important aspects of our lives.

Wishing you all the best for the second semester!

Amanda Tongha
EDITOR



HO TSWA HO MOQOLOTSI

Na le ka mohla re tla ke re lebale mariha a 2022? Ha re ne re tlameha ho tjamela ka mahlong letsatsi le hlhlamang, ka kgutso le bosiu – ka modisana. Ha re sa tla ipata kamora semonkwana kapa yona maske. E bile kimollo e kgolo ka nnete. Ha tsena tsohle di se di boletswe, e ntse e ka ba mohopolo o monate hore o tshware semonkwana bakeng sa dibaka tse patisaneng le nakong eo o nahanang hore e ka nna ya ba o kotsing.

Le ha ho le jwalo, tsena ha se tsona feela ditaba tse monate. Ho phaella mona, re abelana le wena dipale tse thahasellisang tsa UFS ho tloha ka ho tshehetsa dijo ho tswella, ho lema ditshingwana, matla a solar, ho isa ho maikutlo a ho hapa dipapadi a dikgalala tsa rona tsa dipapadi. Ha re bua ka dintho tse ntle tse fihleletsweng, re boetse re ile ra ikopanya le iRecognize peer-to-peer initiative e ithlommeng pele – etsa bonnete ba hore o etela platforomo ena moo o ka fana ka dithoholeto ha ho tshwaneleha.

Pele o re hedi, semestara ya bobedi ya dithuto e potlakela mesebetsing ya qetellong ya selemo ya 2022. Nakong ena, ithlokomele hle hore o qobe mokgathala o tlwaelehleng haholo wa bofelo ba selemo ka ho sebedisa disistimi tse fanang ka tshehetso dikhampaseng tsa rona. Leka ho boloka katamelo e nang le botsitso ka ho ipoloka o shahlile le ho tsepamisa maikutlo, ka hobane bophelo ba rona bo botle, ke karolo ya bohlokwa ka ho fetisisa ya bophelo ba rona.

Re o lakaletsa tsohle tse molemo ka ho fetisisa le katleho ho semestara ya bobedi!

Amanda Tongha
MOQOLOTSI

VAN DIE REDAKTEUR

Sal ons ooit die winter van 2022 vergeet? Toe ons, stil-stil en oornag, die volgende dag in die gesig moes staar – letterlik. Geen wegkruip meer agter 'n masker nie. Dit was so 'n onwerklike verligting. Dit is egter steeds 'n goeie idee om 'n masker byderhand te hê vir daardie beknopte ruimtes en wanneer jy vermoed dat jy in gevaar mag wees.

Dit was egter nie die enigste goeie nuus nie. In hierdie uitgawe deel ons 'n paar merkwaardige UV-stories wat wissel van volhoubare voedsel, tuinmaak, sonkrag, tot die wennergesindheid van ons sportsterre. Van prestasies gepraat, ons kyk ook na die gewilde iRecognize-portuurinisiatief – maak seker dat jy hierdie platform besoek waar jy aan iemand die erkenning kan gee wat hom of haar toekom.

Hierdie jaar sal verby wees voor jy dit weet, met die tweede semester wat voortsnel na die finale bedrywigheide van 2022. Sorg dat jy in hierdie tyd omsien na jou welstand en die bekende einde-van-die-jaar uitputting voorkom deur van die ondersteuningstelsels op ons kampusse gebruik te maak. Probeer om 'n gebalanseerde benadering tot fikswees en fokus te handhaaf, want ons gesondheid is immers een van die belangrikste aspekte van ons lewens.

Alles van die beste vir die tweede semester!

Amanda Tongha
REDAKTEUR



KUSUKA KUMHLELI

Kungake kwenzeke kodwa ukuthi sikhohlwe ubusika bonyaka wezi-2022? Kuthi kunjalo kodwa kufinyaniseke ukuthi kumele sibhekane nolunye usuku olulandelayo. Akusekho manje ukuzifihla ngesimfonyo. Kube umzuzu wenjabulo ongalindelekile. Noma kunjalo, kodwa kungakuhle ukuthi sihlezi sinazo izimfonyo uma sisezindaweni ezicinene noma masibona ukuthi sengathi kunobungozi obusolisayo.

Akusizo njalo izindaba ezikitazayo zodwa lezi. Ukunzela kulokhu, sifisa ukuphinde sethule ezinye ezisematheni zeNyuvesi yase-Free State – kusukela kwezokudla okubukeka kuzoba khona isikhathi eside, ezokutshala, amandla e-Solar kuze kufike emkhubeni omuhle wokunqoba kwezingwazi zezemidlalo. Sisakhuluma ngokunqoba kwezingwazi, sifisa ukuphinde sikhulume ngomdidiyelo owazila ngele- iRecognize peer-to-peer initiative, nokugququzelwa ukuthi siyihlole ezinkundleni zayo sibone ukuthi singaliphosa kanjani itshe esivivaneni.

Lo nyaka uzoshabalala kule kwamazolo ebona ilanga maduze nje, nakhu nesigaba sonyaka sesibili siza ngesivini maqondana nokuqhuba izinhlelo zonyaka wezi-2022 ngokushesha. Ngalesi sikhathi, zinakekele ukuze ugweme ukhwantalala olwejoywayelekile olwenzeka makuphela unyaka ngokuthi usebenzise izinsiza zalo lonke uhlobo ezitholakala emagcekeni amakhempasi enyuvesi. Zama ukuthola indlela engeke ikuphazamise ezokusiza ekutheni uzivocavoce uhlale uzizwa kahle futhi uphokophele phambili, njengoba sazi ngemigomo yempilo, ezintweni zonke ongazicabanga, yikho phela ukuzivocavoca okubaluleke kunakho konke ezimpilweni zethu.

Sinifisela okumhlophe maqondana nesigaba sesibili sonyaka.

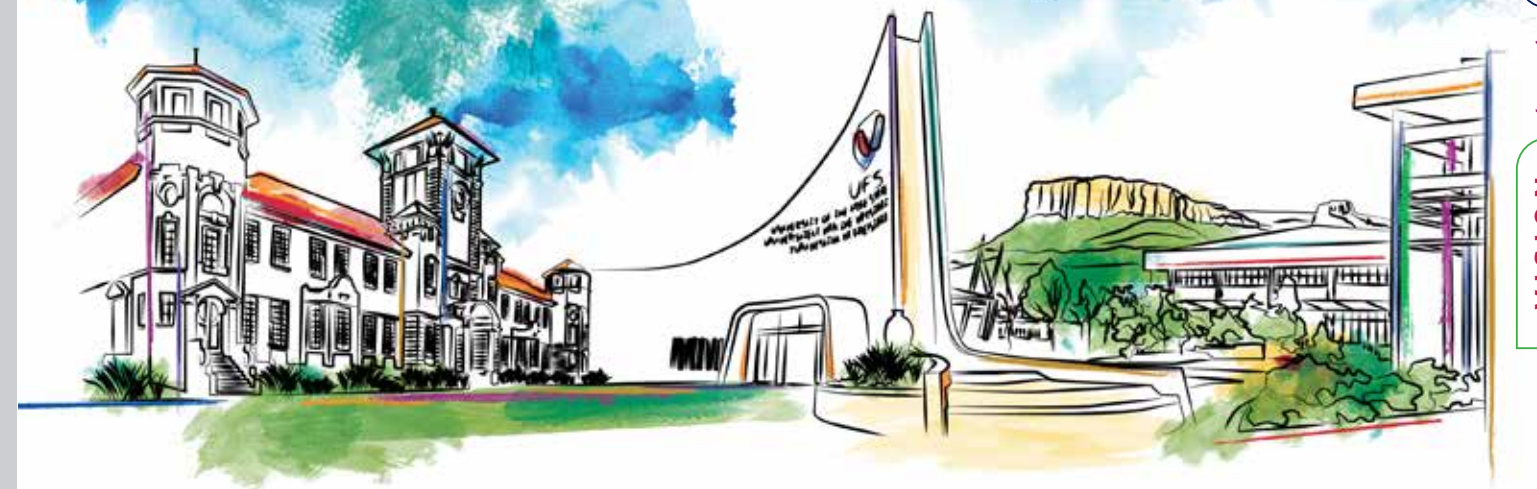
Amanda Tongha
KUMHLELI

NOTICE BOARD



V I S I O N

130



– a **guiding light** for planning
 the **UFS' future**

Earlier this year, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Francis Petersen, shared information in the *In Touch* about the establishment of a planning team tasked to draft an inspiring, compelling long-term vision for the UFS.


Significant progress has been made with the compilation of Vision 130, which is intended as the elaboration of the UFS' intention to shape its future over the next twelve years until 2034, when the university will commemorate its 130th year in existence. It will furthermore form the basis of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan.

“The planning team, consisting of academic and support staff across the three campuses, took a systematic approach by first looking at a diagnostic analysis of the university's internal and external context through a comparative analysis of the

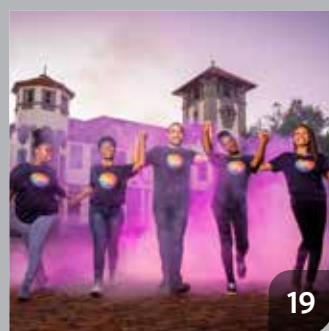
institution's strategic plans over the past ten years,” says Dr Molapo Qhobela, Vice-Rector: Institutional Change, Strategic Partnerships and Societal Impact and coordinator of the Vision 130 planning process.

AN EVOLVING UNIVERSITY

According to Dr Qhobela, Vision 130 is crafted on the solid foundation laid during the university's 118-year-old history. “It reflects, therefore, how in recent times the evolution of the university was greatly guided by the vision that underpins the Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP). Furthermore, it is imperative that there is systemic and logical alignment between Vision 130, the strategic plans, and the annual performance plans,” he says.

The planning team works closely with Prof Petersen in the achievement of this important initiative. The UFS Council deliberated on Vision 130 during a summit held on 13 May 2022 and pledged its support towards the realisation thereof. 

By Lacea Loader



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ODEION STRING QUARTET

proud custodians of world-renowned Quartet of Peace

The Odeion String Quartet (OSQ), the only quartet in residence at any South African university, is the new custodian of the world-famous Quartet of Peace, created by Brian Lisus in honour of South Africa's four Nobel Laureates, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Oliver Tambo, and FW de Klerk. The quartet of four instruments embodies the values of hope, freedom, reconciliation, and peace.

The quartet comprises two violins, a viola, and a cello, all made from indigenous South African wood.

The quartet of instruments was built and created by Lisus in Cape Town in 2010. The Faculty of the Humanities hosted a presentation lecture with Brian Lisus on 18 March 2022, where the QoP was officially introduced to the UFS and the music community

of the three UFS campuses, with the OSQ performing on the instruments.

It was when former Presidents Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, that a friend of Lisus planted the seed that has grown into the quartet we know today. "The concept of what they brought in reconciliation was quite phenomenal," said Brian Lisus. However, the actual instruments were only built in 2005, after discussions with the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre.



Brian Lisus, luthier of the Quartet of Peace.



The Viola of Hope representing former President Nelson Mandela.

Quartet represents opportunity for reflection

Speaking at the event, Prof Francis Petersen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, said he thought the intention of the instruments was to create awareness among communities. "I think the intention was to make the communities, South Africa, and the continent aware of the values that are not only associated with the laureates, but also of what we would like to see in South Africa and the world beyond," he said.

"It is also an opportunity for the UFS to reflect and ask how we are aligned in a tangible way with the values that the quartet symbolises – deeper reflection on what the world and talking about South African society should be and should become," Prof Petersen said.

The Quartet of Peace will be positioned as an important element-not only as part of the Odeion String Quartet, but also the UFS. ❏

By Rulanzen Martin



The Odeion String Quartet performing with the four string instruments are, from the left: Samson Diamod (violin); Sharon de Kock (violin); Jeanne-Louise Moolman (viola), and Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen-Joubert (cello)

Academics from the #ComeWriteWithMe group are meeting every Friday to focus on their writing. From the left are Prof Lynette Jacobs, Jani de Lange from the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies, Johann Möller, Head of the IDEAS Lab, Isabella du Preez, postgraduate student in Higher Education Studies, Bobby Lecoko, Administrative Assistant in the IDEAS Lab, and Dina Mashiyane.



Time to focus:

#ComeWriteWithMe

In an ideal world – whether it is for postgraduate studies or for publication in academic journals – writing articles would have taken place in a quiet, uninterrupted space. No phones ringing, no emails popping up, and no colleagues knocking on your door for a quick chat. With the realities of life at the office, it is not always easy to find time and a space free of distractions to write in.

Prof Lynette Jacobs, Associate Professor in the Department of Open and Distance Learning on the South Campus, has a heart for supporting upcoming researchers, including postgraduate students – in particular South Campus support staff who want to advance their studies and do research.

Before the national lockdown, she hosted initiatives – such as a lunch-hour research session – to support staff with their writing. During lockdown, she continued to stay in contact with the group of researchers by sharing research information and related messages through a WhatsApp broadcast group. This research support she literally kept up for the first 100 days of hard lockdown, not only to inform, "but to create a sense of unity," she says.

Academic writing away from distractions

After returning to campus this year, Prof Jacobs arranged for a

two-day writing retreat. With the favourable outcome of this retreat and inspired by peers at the Coventry University, she started with the #ComeWithMe initiative in May, inviting researchers and aspiring researchers to a silent space in the STIC at the IDEAS Lab, away from phone calls and meetings. Here, a group of sometimes up to 15 people is meeting every Friday from 08:00 till 13:00, focusing on their academic writing. Often, Prof Jacobs provides support when someone struggles with an aspect of their writing. Dina Mashiyane from the Neville Alexander Library on the campus is also available to provide library support.

Prof Jacobs also believes that a space where scholars can meet and not be confined to their often-isolated offices, is also valuable, as they get the opportunity to support each other with their different projects, and to become a research community.

She also appreciates the support that these upcoming scholars receive from their line managers, allowing them to meet on Fridays. At first it was only a group from the South Campus that came together, but initiative are taking off and colleagues from the Bloemfontein Campus is also joining. Prof Jacobs hopes that many of the staff-members will have advanced enough towards the end of the year so that they can take up the offer by the Centre for Graduate Support for a writing retreat to finalise their manuscripts. The growth of this drive to promote and enable research, together with the positive feedback, is proof of its success. "Wonderful idea! Thank you for your support in our writing journey", "The space is so conducive for writing", are but some of the feedback received from participants. ❏

By Leonie Bolleurs

Looking ahead

Towns present endless possibilities for Prof Philippe Burger, who is able to view the ordinary, and even extraordinary, and capture and convey these interpretations in memorable meaningful photos. With an incredible knack for capturing the charm and beauty of small towns and telling their stories through pictures, Prof Burger has photographed every town in the Free State (85) and Northern Cape (235), many of which were exhibited.

Away from the camera, Prof Burger is busy with his real work of the written word. As the recently appointed Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, he is busy carving and realising the vision of the faculty and strengthening its offering through the digitalisation and internationalisation of qualifications offered, while exposing students to developments in industry. "I consider my appointment as dean both as a privilege to serve, and a wonderful challenge to achieve new things for the faculty, our staff, and our students," says Prof Burger about his appointment as dean. Prof Burger sees a role for industry experts and international university academics to teach a few modules and units in the faculty. "I also want our academics to get involved in teaching at universities abroad and to contribute to society and industry through their academic work," explains Prof Burger. He would also like to strengthen



Prof Philippe Burger

the research capacity of the faculty in a number of niche areas, and to build the reputation of the faculty and the UFS as scholars of note. "Let's push the frontiers of the seemingly possible. We often limit our thinking to what is, by what we have been doing for so long, and by limiting our goals to the constraints of our current resources," says Prof Burger.

Prof Burger considers the qualifications offered in the faculty as a foundation on which students can build their lives and careers. According to Prof Burger, it is possible to reach what may sometimes seem unattainable. This can be done by setting goals outside one's current resource constraints and then looking for the missing resources. "If someone else can buy into our goals, share those goals, then they might assist by augmenting our limited resources, and co-create with us," says Prof Burger. "What seemed out of reach, then becomes the obviously attainable and the key in all of this will be partnerships and building and maintaining a strong UFS team. Creating those partnerships takes hard work and the building of trust – trust in the quality of work we do, and trust in who we are and what we stand for. That is a challenge I know we can meet with the wonderful people in my team," says Prof Burger.

A former student of the UFS, Prof Burger appreciates the opportunities the UFS has given him to build his academic career, which entailed three two-month sabbaticals at the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2007, 2010 and 2012, as well as spending a month as visiting scholar at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC in 2009. In 2016, Prof Burger spent a nine-month sabbatical as Fulbright Exchange Scholar in the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York City, where he was hosted by world-renowned economics scholar, Prof Jeffrey Sachs.

An avid reader, keen photographer with an interest in history, politics, and current affairs, and even finding time for a good movie over the weekend if time permits – Prof Burger certainly knows how to pause and strike a balance. ✎

Dr Nitha Ramnath

Ravenswood Generating Station, New York



Stairway to heaven on a baobab tree, Limpopo



Fast driving, San Diego



The Perusing Pigeon: Lesson from an Uninvited Guest



Barend Nagel is Audio-Visual Specialist in the Department of Communication and Marketing.

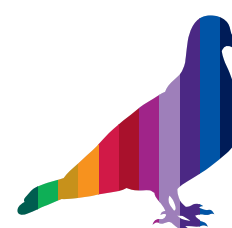
The April 2022 Graduation Ceremonies

are a chapter for future history books!

The ceremonies were the first in-person

ceremonies since the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world. It was magnificent to hear the beating of the drums and to see the procession walk from the Main Building to the Callie Human Centre. However, there was one problem – an uninvited guest, perched and curious, was watching from above.

A pigeon decided to join the celebrations, as the April 2022 Graduation Ceremonies took place in the Callie Human Hall. Innocent as it was, the pigeon (let's call it Sam) caused somewhat of a distraction and had to be removed from the hall.



Sam had me thinking about the symbolic meaning of its attendance at the ceremonies. Could it have been a reminder to us all that Sam wished peace for the congregation? Or could Sam have been the symbol of a departed loved one looking proudly at the accomplishments of

so many graduates? Perhaps Sam would have been a graduate at one of the ceremonies – or maybe Sam was just a bird in the wrong place at the wrong time. Who knows?

The question is: what does Sam signify? It might bear a different meaning to everyone, which made the bird's visit so much more precious than we can imagine.

Thousands of people visited the Callie Human Hall along with Sam, so the pigeon would not have gone unnoticed, and to me, that is precisely the meaning. Sam was, simply said, there; not fitting in, but part of something bigger – the celebration of success, growth, aspirations, and dreams.

You may not agree with me and that is perfectly fine, but I believe that Sam reminds us that, no matter where we are or who we are, we are never alone. Someone is always looking out for us, because we are part of something bigger – we are a Kovsie family! May 'a Sam' always be there for us to celebrate success, growth, aspiration, and dreams. ✎

By Barend Nagel

UFS *beefs up* electricity supply on campuses with solar plants

With load shedding that seemingly have no end in sight, the University of the Free State (UFS) is building a hybrid diesel-solar system microgrid solution on the Qwaqwa Campus and a 1 MWp solar plant on the Bloemfontein Campus to provide electricity to the institution.

The microgrid hybrid system built on the Qwaqwa Campus will be independent, providing electricity to the campus using solar and diesel generators; the 1 MWp solar plant north of Shimla Park on the Bloemfontein Campus will feed into the main internal campus networks.

Nicolaas Esterhuysen, Director of Engineering Services in University Estates, says: “Currently, 12% of the total electricity consumption on the Bloemfontein Campus are generated by solar power. Both projects are part of the commitment by the UFS to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save on electricity costs.”

Providing power for the entire campus

Over the past two years, the frequency and duration of power interruptions on the Qwaqwa Campus have become

unbearable, prompting the UFS management to build one of the biggest hybrid diesel – solar systems in South Africa, comprising 1 600 kVA diesel generation and a 759 kWp solar system.

He says: “All approvals have been completed. Construction on the project, with the ordering of long-lead items, will start in May 2022. The existing solar plant on the Qwaqwa Campus will be integrated with the main diesel-generating plant at the substation to provide power for the entire campus. It was critical to connect the solar plant to lower our dependency on diesel.”

Phase one of the project has been completed with the installation of an uninterrupted power supply on all network switches on campus to ensure continuous network connectivity recess. Phase two, the upgrade of the campus substation electrical switchgear, is scheduled for the July recess and phase three, the installation of generators connected to the existing solar plant, will be completed in September 2022.

Preserving resources

The microgrid can also work with the municipal electrical supply – when available – or independently, to ensure continuous power supply to the entire campus.

Nicolaas says: “hybrid diesel-solar system on the Qwaqwa Campus is expected to be completed in September, depending on the availability of long-lead material, and the 1MWp solar plant in October 2022.”

He urged the UFS community to “preserve the resources; we managed to decrease the total electricity consumption by 26%, but the electricity costs still increased by 3%. Every small contribution does make a difference”.

By Lunga Luthuli

Pictured is a solar power plant on the Qwaqwa Campus, which is part of the project by the University of the Free State in response to load shedding and the constant electricity supply interruptions on campus.



The entrance to the Administration Building on the UFS South Campus after Jeanné Combrinck, with the assistance of Lefika Landscaping, changed it into a beautiful, relaxing space for staff, students, and visitors to enjoy.

DREAM GARDEN *becomes* reality during COVID pandemic

‘Life begins the day you start a garden.’

CHINESE PROVERB

Jeanné Combrinck from University Estates on the South Campus of the University of the Free State (UFS) says that she has been dreaming of creating a beautiful garden on the South Campus for many years. “I have envisioned this garden for such a long time, but there was never a perfect time to start the construction. However, with everyone working from home during the pandemic, I was finally able to start labouring on my dream.”

Appreciating nature

“I wanted to create a peaceful and tranquil environment at the main entrance of the Administration Building on the campus for all visitors and employees to experience. People need a place to relax and to appreciate nature, but also to unwind, especially considering today’s hectic pace,” says Combrinck, who started this project in November 2020.

She believes the South Campus is a unique area and she and her team are doing their best to keep the environment as natural as possible. “Ninety percent of the plants they used are waterwise and low maintenance,” she explains.

With rocks and plants such as Viburnum, Carissa, Tulbaghia, Bulbine, Strelitzia reginae, Dietes, Pelargoniums, Prunus, Plumbago, and grass, Combrinck successfully managed to create, as she explains, “a real stress reliever garden, a space where staff and students can enjoy themselves”.

With the assistance of Lefika Landscaping, she placed various sizes of rocks, not only to create different levels in the area, but also to prevent erosion. “The big rocks in the garden were moved all the way from the southern side of the campus,” says Combrinck.

Creating a lovely space

The project also includes changing the irrigation and paving in the area where three picnic spots were constructed. Shade is provided by the five Olea Africana trees that help to create this lovely space.

The same natural landscaping of the garden entrance to the Administration Building was expanded to a few other small gardens on the South Campus. According to Combrinck, gardening contract workers from Phadisi maintain the gardens daily with pride and devotion.

By Leonie Bolleurs

NICOLAAS ESTERHUYSEN

earns ***in-demand***

GCC QUALIFICATION

Completing the Government Certificate of Compliance (GCC), Nicolaas Esterhuysen, Director: Engineering Services in the Division of University Estates, believes the recent 6-20% pass rate nationally is “proof of how challenging the exam is”.

Nicolaas says, “This is mainly due to the extensive scope of the exams, which cover electrical and mechanical installations and the complete Occupational Health and Safety Act.”

Completing the certificate will help Nicolaas and the university, because it is a requirement when appointing a certified engineer to oversee and take legal responsibility for the implementation of the university’s complex and high-demand electrical and mechanical infrastructure.

According to Nicolaas, “The aim of passing the GCC exams



Nicolaas Esterhuysen, Director: Engineering Services in University Estates, recently completed the sought-after Government Certificate of Compliance.

is to become a certified engineer, as this carries certain legal responsibilities in the workplace. This also affirms the university’s commitment to providing a workplace that is safe, reliable, and free from hazards.”

With his team, Nicolaas is responsible for all the electrical and mechanical installations on campus, and is accountable for the entire asset life cycle, from concept and planning to execution and maintenance.

Nicolaas states, “A candidate must already be a qualified electrical or mechanical engineer with at least five years’ relevant experience. The exams are split into two sections. I completed the technical exam in June 2021 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act exam in November 2021.”

“I was part of an online study group that met every Saturday morning, and I used any other time I could find. I also want to thank my team for taking charge when I was studying, as well as my line manager, Nico Janse van Rensburg, for all the support during the examination.”

By Lunga Luthuli

NTATE MANYARELA’S

40 years

evolving journey

ON THE QWAQWA CAMPUS

He has seen the many changing faces of the Qwaqwa Campus, and 40 years later, Mokitlane Manyarela says he wouldn’t have had it any other way.

Fondly known as Ntate Manyarela, he celebrated his 40th year of work on the campus, having started on 1 January 1982 at the age of 18. He recalls arriving at the campus offices in town seeking employment, as back then there were no “buildings or campus”.

“I started working as a general worker, because there was nothing else to do. All the university’s content came from Turfloop in those days. As time went by, I worked in the reprographic section, printing exam papers. This was my first official job, until the campus relocated in 1988 to where we are now. All the buildings that are now filling this campus were constructed right in front of my eyes,” he says.

Doing things wholeheartedly

He has worked for various departments on the campus, such as Procurement, Cashiers, and Finance. In 2007, he joined the Department of Transport, and this is where he still works as an assistant officer. “What’s made me stay this long is not getting into fights with anyone and always following instructions given to me. I’ve worked under many different bosses, and I believe that none of them have anything negative to say about me. Therefore, I can say I’ve never had a reason to leave, because everything I’ve done, I did wholeheartedly.”

Manyarela says the university also afforded his wife and children the opportunity to obtain their degrees, which is something he considers a huge achievement. “All that I have, has been achieved at this institution. It’s been a wonderful journey. I have no complaints, I am content. I’ve reached my old age here. I don’t know any other job or work environment, this place has become like home to me, and I’m prepared to still give my all to this university, even though old age is now catching up with me.”

By Nonsindiso Qwabe

Mokitlane Manyarela has seen it all in 40 years working on the Qwaqwa Campus.



THE STORY BEHIND *our* story



Motlalepule Judith Lefa

Assistant Officer in the Department of Social Responsibility, Enterprises, and Community Engagement, South Campus

“Caring for others is one of the pillars of character in our department, together with trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship. Having compassion for others is integrated into all we do. It includes being kind – not only to my colleagues – but also to all the teachers and learners we work with. We acknowledge other people as valuable human beings with a right to be themselves, granting them the opportunity to be the best person they can be.”



Prof Francois Strydom

Senior Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

“It is a privilege to develop initiatives focused on unleashing the potential of our students and staff to learn and teach at the UFS. In the CTL, we are committed to relentless innovation in student success, and learning and teaching initiatives that are internationally benchmarked and adapted to be leading examples in the South African context. We are continuously impressed and often overwhelmed by the commitment of our students and staff to quality learning and teaching.”



Bonolo Makhalemele

USDP coordinator in the Office for International Affairs

“I have been fortunate to experience being both the bearer and receiver of an outstanding university experience at our institution. As a PhD candidate in the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development, I am continuously receiving support in every academic endeavour I find interest in, all in the effort of finding sustainable solutions for the people of this continent. I am also extending this kind of care to every stakeholder that I encounter at the Office for International Affairs. In essence, an outstanding university experience is one that is fully immersed in ubuntu!”



Prof Sethulego Matebesi

Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology

“I regard impactful engagement as a powerful reciprocal currency between my scholarship of engagement – utilising various platforms – and society. In many respects, my work, which broaches complex societal challenges, has led to critical linkages with key government and private institutions and the wider public. Moreover, this engagement enhances my scholarship of discovery through invited publications and collaborations.”



Nonsindiso Qwabe

Senior Communication Officer in the Department of Communication and Marketing, Qwaqwa Campus

“I am a storyteller, and I am the most fulfilled when I spend my time telling stories the best way I know. As a custodian of UFS news, through the work that I am doing, I get to inspire, make an impact, and transform lives every day. In this process, I’ve also been able to craft the story of my own growth and success as a young professional. This was only made possible by the opportunities the UFS has presented me with.”

Creating opportunities for growth, engagement with society, a character of caring, and an outstanding university experience. These are all key aspects of the university’s new narrative; a narrative that will differentiate the UFS from its competitors; a narrative that clarifies what we stand for and what we want people to know us for.

We believe that a good narrative is owned by the institution. *Dumela* asked a few colleagues to provide their take on the different aspects of the narrative and how they incorporate these into their work lives. 📌

By Leonie Bolleurs

From the **land** to the **lab**, tested maize products **become** a **livelihood** for rural women



Dried putu pap samples.

Maize is widely regarded as one of the most crucial agricultural products globally, serving as a staple food in many countries.

In 2021, the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development, with its expertise and state-of-the-art facilities for food product development and sensory analysis, joined Grain SA in a project to develop innovative food products for low-income communities in South Africa.



In this project, which will address two of South Africa's major challenges, those of household food security and job creation, the group of scientists looked at a process called nixtamalisation.

Dr Alba du Toit, Senior Lecturer in the department, describes the nixtamalisation process: "Dried maize kernels are cooked and soaked overnight in an alkaline solution, washed and hulled; the cooking and soaking exercise causes the outer covering of the maize to soften, resulting in it being easily separated from the kernels. This product is now called nixtamal."



Taylor Colbert and Sisipho Rebe busy preparing samples in the sensory lab for the tasting tests.



A processing method, called nixtamalization, was introduced to groups of rural women to produce food products with improved nutrient content to combat malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in South African households.



State-of-the-art Sensory Lab


She says nixtamalisation provides several benefits over unprocessed grains. It removes 100% of aflatoxins, the toxic compounds produced by moulds during the storage of dried maize kernels that can cause liver damage and cancer. The nixtamalisation process can also increase the nutritional value of maize, preventing malnourishment.

The project also has the likelihood of empowering women to start their own businesses. PhD and master's students have developed a recipe booklet containing 20 recipes that could easily be produced, packaged, and marketed by women from low-income communities.



The products that were developed, only used equipment is available to the women. "A coffee mug serves as a measuring cup, a bottle as a rolling pin, and an upside-down jar as a cookie-cutter for the corn chips," says Dr Du Toit.

To be approved as good enough, several of these products have been tested in the university's state-of-the-art Sensory Lab under the guidance of Dr Carina Bothma, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development.

With the jar (just-about-right) test and the consumers' overall liking test, the products were scored for attributes such as taste, texture, appearance, and aroma. 

By Leonie Bolleurs



Dr Martin Clark, motivated to ***impact*** those around him

Persistent. This is the word one would use to describe Dr Martin Clark, Lecturer in the Department of Geology. With tenacity, enthusiasm, and determination, he pursues life – whether it is as lecturer, supervisor, Head of the MAGIC lab and research group, researcher, husband, powerlifter, or soon-to-be father.



Dr Martin Clark, who believes true leaders lead by example, strives to have an impact on those around him.

His parents, whom he considered his childhood heroes, saw to it that he kept his feet firmly on the ground. His father, an academic himself, showed Dr Clark that it is a combination of hard work, passion, and love for what you do that makes a real impact and creates lifelong satisfaction. His mother, he asserts, “survived against significant odds, and one could even say she thrived in turbulent and difficult circumstances”.

Adding value

Motivated to have an impact on the lives of those around him, Dr Clark is convinced that although a career can last decades, lost time can never be replaced. “So, I aim to spend the time available to me optimally to me to ensure I have the largest impact I possibly can,” he adds.

With research focusing on unravelling geological unknowns through field-based and remote sensing-based methodologies, Dr Clark is focused to add to our understanding of the

geological processes which shifted, modified, removed, or allowed emplacement of the rocks being studied in areas that extend across large swaths of South Africa from the Karoo, to Limpopo, and down to Mpumalanga. “The technologies we use (i.e., satellites and drones) also aim to characterise the controls on resources trapped in rocks, such as groundwater, whereby we use surface observations collected through various lenses to address questions regarding the mobility and temporal variability of this incredibly important resource,” he adds.

Contributing to greatness

Besides his research, Dr Clark also enjoys teaching. The fact that the class of students, currently from across South Africa and Lesotho, will take what he is teaching them back to their communities, excites him. He strongly asserts that it is a privilege to be able to contribute to the development of young minds. “Giving students tools that will enable them to find great jobs, develop great careers, and have great impacts on their communities is by far the most rewarding aspect of the teaching I am privileged to do,” he states.

With the same passion he carries out his research and teaching responsibilities, Dr Clark applies himself to the sport he practises – powerlifting. Three years ago when he moved to Bloemfontein, he observed “how dedicated locals were to sports excellence”. He says it is hard not to strive for excellence when you interact with people like his coach, who “lives, breathes, and exudes dedication to the sport”. 📌

By Leonie Bolleurs

“Giving students tools that will enable them to find great jobs, develop great careers, and have a great impact on their communities is by far the most rewarding aspect of the teaching I do.”

DR MARTIN CLARK

BUILDING CAPACITY

It is often said that work coming from a place of passion speaks for itself. Improving teacher education, as well as finding innovative ways to make learners fall in love with the classroom, is a passion that often speaks for itself for Dr Kwazi Magwenzi, Director of Schools Projects and Innovation in the Faculty of Education.

Dr Magwenzi is a former high school teacher who went on to pursue her PhD in teacher education. She also completed an MBA to bridge the gap between what she could do within the academic and corporate spaces. Having joined the UFS in 2021, she says she was drawn most by the opportunity to promote the growth and development of teacher education, not only for the institution and its immediate communities, but also in the SADAC region. “We have plans to develop a regional centre that will foster the growth and development of math and science education capacity in teachers and schools.”

She describes her role as one that is housed within the university but allows her to be outward-looking in order to service teachers, schools, TVET colleges, and communities at large. She says she has always been attracted to the idea of making an impact in teacher development. “My desire is to use my role to foster innovation and new programmes that will really build capacity.” Part of her plans for the role include establishing a regional teachers’ institute for math and science on campus.

“This will enable us to have a repository of research techniques, teaching and learning techniques that teachers can learn from, as well as a regional network of teachers, so that we can end up with a strong body of professionals who can influence policy and teacher development initiatives.” 📌

By Nonsindiso Qwabe



Dr Kwazi Magwenzi, Director: Schools Projects and Innovation – Faculty of Education.



COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

One of the highlights of 2022 is the successful Council on Higher Education (CHE) Institutional Audit (IA) site visit to the University of the Free State (UFS). This site visit constituted a major part of the audit process following the UFS' self-reflection on its integrated quality management system. After a year of preparation, an expert panel visited our campuses from 9 to 13 May 2022 to conclude the institutional audit before drafting the audit report.



From the left: Dr Bongiwe Hobololo, Dr Saretha Brüssow, Prof Khaya Mfenyana, Prof Nolutho Diko, Prof Francis Petersen, Prof Jennifer Roberts, Prof Chris von Klemperer, Ms Liana Griesel, and Dr Rejoice Nsibande.



The CHE, an independent statutory body, is the national authority for quality assurance and promotion in higher education. The CHE, through the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), exercises its quality assurance function using a variety of mechanisms, one of which is institutional audits that are mandated by the Higher Education Act. Institutional audits are aimed at assessing the integrated quality management systems at institutions, with a specific focus on the management of the core academic functions of higher education, that is, teaching and learning, research, and community engagement, as framed by the institution's vision and strategic goals.

In preparing for the audit, the university was able to review its progress and identify areas where changes and refocusing are required. After planning and strategising, a steering committee presented readiness workshops before hosting several roadshows to brief academic and support staff about their role in the audit. Via the steering committee, numerous UFS staff members contributed to the content of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted in electronic format early in 2022, with several links to supporting documents and institutional videos included in a portfolio of evidence (PoE). The accuracy, completeness, and reliability of the information provided in the SER and the PoE were central to the process.

Throughout the preparation that led to the site visit, the UFS community was kept informed with relevant communication on our various channels, counting down the time until the site visit began. A dedicated group of students acted as ambassa-

dors during the visit and supported the panel in navigating our campuses. Several staff members and students, Council and Senate members, alumni, as well as external key stakeholders were interviewed by the panel to get a clear picture of the university's character and how the design and implementation of our integrated quality management system enhances the likelihood of student success and improves the quality of teaching and learning, research, as well as integrated community engagement within the context of the university's mission.


The Academic Planning Unit in the UFS Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning (DIRAP) was central to the successful execution of this momentous event. The panel repeatedly commended the quality of documentation provided, as well as the smooth logistical execution of the site visit, and we would like to express our gratitude to each person who contributed to this event – we value and appreciate your participation and outstanding approach.

After receiving the audit report, the UFS is given time to respond to the findings before a final report is presented. Based on these findings, an improvement plan will be developed and monitored by means of progress reports. Quality assurance is a continuous and systematic process, and the UFS is committed to continuing to enhance our quality output in line with environmental and social changes and demand. 📌

By Dr Cindé Greyling

Celebrating on-campus graduations

Almost 7 000 jubilant graduates were part of the first in-person graduation ceremonies of the UFS in almost two years.

These ceremonies took place from 19 to 21 April on the Bloemfontein Campus, and on 29 and 30 April on the Qwaqwa Campus. During the celebrations, two Council medals and six honorary doctorates were conferred. The honorary doctorate recipients were Dr Winnie Byanyima, Prof Mike Wingfield, Justice Albie Sachs, Judge Dennis Davis, and Justice Dikgang Moseneke. Nico Janse van Rensburg, Senior Director: University Estates and Dr Nicholas Pearce, Head of the Department of Surgery received a Council and Chancellor's Medal, respectively. Congratulations to all graduates and awardees – it is a privilege and honour to play a part in your academic and professional journey. 



UFS staff **positively** recognise **each other** through

iRecognize PROGRAMME



**Natasha Nel, UFS
Organisational
Development
Specialist.**

Since it was launched on 7 February 2022, the iRecognize programme has received more than 870 badges from University of the Free State staff members recognising fellow colleagues for the positive contribution they add through their work to the UFS.

The platform is a peer-to-peer initiative of the Division of Organisational Development and Employee Well-being for UFS staff to recognise and appreciate the dedication and excellence of their colleagues.

Natasha Nel, UFS Organisational Development Specialist, said: "Recognition costs nothing, yet the impact is significant. Recognising your employees, team members or clients empowers them and can help create a positive culture within the university and give a voice to our staff members."

Promoting positive behaviour

Through the iRecognize platform, which promotes positive behaviour, UFS staff members have the opportunity to recognise

colleagues from different units, divisions, faculties, and campuses.

Natasha said: "Our Workplace Engagement results in 2017–2021 indicated that the reward driver was the lowest dimension of engagement within the university and a factor that contributed to staff members' decision to leave the employment of the university."

The criteria for staff to recognise colleagues include timeliness, authenticity, and specificity, and the badges that staff members can use is also aligned with the university's competency framework. The platform also includes an option to send recognition privately.

Natasha said: "The iRecognize programme is a relatively new platform and for future, the focus will be on utilising more features, including nominations – voting for the employee of the month, quarter, or year, service anniversaries and birthdays."

The platform is accessible to all staff members for the next two years. The Organisational Development and Employee Well-being Division also plans to investigate the use of a points system with the recognition platform to recognise staff members in a non-monetary manner (redeeming points).

By Lunga Luthuli

University of the Free State badges



The Team-player

This badge recognises staff members who help push work forward within the Department / Faculty and motivate other team members to do so #iCelebrate

Sendable by
Anyone

Type
Recognition

**Some of the badges with which
staff can recognise colleagues.**

NEW LIBRARIAN FOR SOUTH CAMPUS

'A reading nation is a leading nation'



**Dina Mashiyane, inspired by changes
in her field of expertise, was appointed
as the Assistant Director: Library and
Information Services of the Neville
Alexander Library on the South Campus.**

to ensure that the Neville Alexander Library is equipped with the means necessary for meeting the changing needs of all its users. In support of the UFS Library and Information Services (LIS) Strategic Plan 2021–2025 to see world-class, digital, state-of-the-art libraries, she is also of the opinion that a library, as the heart of the university, ought to provide information resources and facilities that are relevant in addressing the teaching, learning, and research demands of the institution.

"Technological advancements are reinventing the LIS landscape daily, and it is imperative to align our processes and practices with the new trends. In line with the UFS' strategic objectives, LIS will ensure that there are innovative tools and resources to support teaching, learning, and research needs.

"I also believe that the campus community will benefit from personnel who are continuously endeavouring to adapt to new trends within the library sector, in order to provide its users with an exceptional experience.

"In addition, an avid reader myself, I plan to enhance the culture of reading through the acquisition of leisure reading collections; I believe 'a reading nation, is a leading nation'."

Reinvention of spaces

In terms of library spaces, Mashiyane states, "Gone are those days when libraries were perceived as quiet places, with librarians always 'shushing' users. The Neville Alexander library will be reinvented to align with the spaces of the 21st-century Library, supporting the pedagogical practice of collaborative learning."

By Leonie Bolleurs

Dina Mashiyane was appointed as the Assistant Director: Library and Information Services of the Neville Alexander Library on the UFS South Campus in April 2021. Her position as librarian is an opportunity to engage with various individuals and she enjoys using this platform to share her knowledge and experience with the South Campus community.

After joining the UFS Sasol Library staff in 2015, Mashiyane worked at the North-West University on both its Potchefstroom and Mahikeng Campuses, where she was appointed as Undergraduate Support Librarian, and a few years later, as Faculty Librarian for Education and Health Sciences. Mashiyane was also the co-founder of the Bokamoso Literature Club and coordinated knowledge-sharing workshops for staff members at the NWU Mahikeng Library.

With a master's degree in her field, she sees herself as a young and emerging researcher who aspires to contribute to bridging the knowledge gap in her field. During her tenure at the NWU Mahikeng Campus Library, she published one single-authored paper and co-authored five journal articles in both international and national journals.

Bridging the knowledge gap

Responsible for managing and overseeing all the library activities on the South Campus, Mashiyane says she strives

Blow the whistle on UNETHICAL AND MISCONDUCT

AT THE UFS

Fraud, corruption, unethical conduct, and misconduct are all acts that purposefully disregard legal regulations and unjustly erode ethical mechanisms. Becoming a whistle-blower is one way of making your employer aware of any unethical and illegal practices taking place in the workplace. On employment, we accept a duty to act in the best interests of our employers. Reporting suspected or known unethical activity forms part of this duty.

The UFS whistleblowing hotline is part of the UFS' commitment to zero tolerance for dishonest and unethical behaviour of any by our stakeholders. It is a key tool to promote individual responsibility and organisational accountability in combating fraud, corruption, and unethical conduct.

Report fraud, corruption, unethical conduct, and misconduct confidentially and anonymously on any of the following platforms:

- Dial the toll-free number, 0800 122 337 (lines are manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
- Send an SMS to 33490
- Send a toll-free fax to 0800 212 689
- Send an email to: ufs@whistleblowing.co.za
- Postal: FREEPOST KZN665, MUSGRAVE 4062
- Online: www.whistleblowing.co.za

How the Whistle-blowing Hotline works:

■ STEP 1

Dial/email/SMS, or fax.

■ STEP 2

You may call anonymously, but make sure that you give all the information and details to the person answering the telephone.

■ STEP 3

You will be given a reference number – keep this confidential.

By Nonsindiso Qwabe

This platform is available to staff and students here:
ufs@whistleblowing.co.za



How to **start exercising** again after taking a **long break**

After a prolonged period of inactivity, most people will not be able to perform at the same level as they did before.

By Burneline Kaars from the Division of Organisational Development and Employee Well-being.

When returning to exercise after some time off, it is vital to set realistic goals. If you've gotten off track, here are some suggestions on how to get back into a healthy routine and restart your exercise habit.

1 Start with something easy

If you are having trouble getting back into exercising and feel completely overwhelmed, it is sometimes helpful to start with something simple, such as going for a brisk walk, Pilates, or a quick jog to get your blood flowing. Join the Organisational Development and Employee Well-being power walks every Monday and Thursday between 12:50 and 13:30 in front of the Main Building, and Pilates on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

2 Stick to the 'five-minute rule'

When you are just getting back into the swing of things, the prospect of completing a whole 30-minute or hour-long workout may seem quite daunting at first. As a result, many people give up before they even begin – start with only five minutes and see where it takes you.

3 Remember how good it makes you feel

We often put too much focus on the effort rather than the result. Working out has the advantage of making people feel better later, even if it is challenging at the time. Just keep in mind the post-workout high. Except for a few sore muscles, you will never be sorry for working out.

4 Schedule it

It is critical to set aside time each day for exercise. Choose a time when you will not be easily distracted. There is no such thing as a 'perfect time' to exercise; everything is determined by your individual schedule and preferences. Remember, it is always better to do something than to do nothing.

5 Prep the night before

Prepare your gym bag the night before and keep it next to your bed. Place your alarm clock on the opposite side of the room from where you sleep so that you must get out of bed to turn it off. If you usually work out after work, you should use a similar approach – prepare your gym bag and store it near your workstation.

6 Find an exercise buddy

You can easily skip your workout routine when you do not have anyone else to answer to but yourself. Exercise becomes a little more fun when there is a social component to it as well. When you exercise with a friend, co-worker, or family member, it is easier to stay inspired, hold each other accountable, and stay on track with your training plan.

7 Do it for yourself, not anyone else

This is perhaps the most important rule to keep in mind. When it comes to exercise, it should be about self-esteem, confidence, and striving to be the greatest version of yourself. Every time you exercise, acknowledge that you have done something good for yourself and celebrate the small wins. Be consistent! "Successful people do consistently what others do occasionally" (Craig Groeschel). The more consistent you are with your exercise routine, the easier it becomes, and exercising will soon become a natural part of your daily life.

Attitude of UFS sports stars helped them **excel** in **tough times**

“Looking back now, I don’t really know how we made it through (lockdown). Because when we came back, we were really fit and ready to come back on court.”

Sne Mdletshe describes the challenges that sports stars, and specifically the University of the Free State (UFS) netball team, had to face during the COVID-19 pandemic, as almost beyond belief.

According to her, they had to have the right attitude to overcome the adversities.

Mdletshe and seven other UFS athletes were honoured for international participation from 2019 to 2021 during a KovsieSport Awards function in May 2022 (on 17 May 2022), with the theme ‘honouring the brave’.

KovsieSport stars

The other recipients were Khanyisa Chawane (Proteas), Bianca de Wee (SA U21), Refiloe Nketsa (Proteas), Lefèvre Rademan (Proteas), Rolene Streutker (SA U21), Chanel Vrey (SA U21 – all netball), and Robert Summers (SA team; badminton).

Louzanne Coetzee and her guides, Claus Kempen and Estean Badenhorst, received a special award. Coetzee, who was the guest speaker at the awards ceremony, won silver and bronze medals at the Paralympic Games in 2021.

Back, from the left, are Claus Kempen (Louzanne Coetzee’s guide), Louzanne Coetzee, Rolene Streutker, Bianca de Wee, and Robert Summers.

Front, from the left, are Khanyisa Chawane, Sne Mdletshe, Chanel Vrey, and Refiloe Nketsa. Lefèvre Rademan was not present, because she is playing netball in England.

Mdletshe became the 19th Kovsie to represent the Proteas when she made her national debut in 2020.

The UFS vice-captain says it was tough to train, and they had to send in videos of their training and practice schedules.

“Being at home, you don’t have much. You literally have your driveway or garage to train in.”

She attributes their success to the planning and hard work of the UFS coaches, management, and players. The UFS also won the Varsity Netball title for a fourth time in 2021.

“I think about all the players and how resilient they were, because I know what I went through, being a student and an athlete at home.”

Summers says he worked on the off-court aspects of his game during lockdown and reaped the rewards at competitions such as the All-Africa Championships in Uganda in 2021.

“I saw lockdown as an opportunity to put in the hard work, while others might not have done the same.

“My former conditioning coach, Niel Pretorius, said these are the times that millionaires are made.”

By Jóhann Thormählen

PHOTO | Hannes Naude

