

Office for International Affairs

Date: 4 October 2024

Time: 15:00-22:00

Venue: UFS BFN (Centenary Complex)

## **Report on ICDF**

### **Background**

The Office for International Affairs, in collaboration with Arts and Culture, hosted the International Cultural Diversity Festival (ICDF) on 4 October 2024 at the Centenary Complex on campus. The event commenced at 15:00 and ended at 22:00. This celebration of diverse cultures seeks to emphasise the values of the University and spread the spirit of cultural diversity, inclusion, and unity among the UFS community. To achieve this goal, the event allowed UFS students and cultural associations to showcase their nuanced cultural dances, music, traditional regalia, traditional food, and art. The overall purpose of this celebration is to emphasise the UFS' commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and creating an inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds can engage, learn, and appreciate each other's heritage. To make this celebration more exciting, the Office for International Affairs has sponsored an award for the Best Cultural Dance.

### **An exchange of diverse cultures**

The event featured traditional dances from UFS cultural associations, namely the Xhosa Student Association, BaSotho Student Association, Pedi Student Association, Batswana Student Association, Ubumbano LukaZulu, VhaVenda Student Association, and Swati Student Association, each offering a unique and immersive experience for attendees.

Performances included traditional Xhosa dances such as the imfene and indlamu, where dancers adorned in colourful attire captivated the audience with their intricate footwork and energetic movements. The Sotho group presented the pitsa, a graceful yet powerful dance often performed to celebrate community unity. At the same time, the Pedi dancers brought to life the dipina dance, a rhythmic display of storytelling through movement. These dances, accompanied by traditional instruments such as the drums, infused the event with rhythm, colour, and energy that transported the audience to the heart of each culture.

To embrace cultural diversity, modern dancers from UFS dance groups took the stage and captivated the audience with Western mixed with African dance moves; these dance groups included the Koded Blvck dance crew, Beyers and Onteniqua Step Up and Dance, Legatum Step Up and Dance, Akasia and Roosmaryn Step Up and Dance. Throughout the history of African people, music has been the centre of their celebrations, be it praising the Creator, a traditional ceremony, or a celebration of something. Hence, a cultural diversity celebration would not have given the audience a complete experience without music. The Lilongwe Choir and the Kovie Song Orchestra from the Division of Student Recruitment complemented the traditional dances with a spirit of praise, with the Kovie Song Orchestra launching their song Mmoho. Africans have always been storytellers, and through storytelling, they express and communicate messages. Role-playing by the UFS Acting Society expressed cultural diversity while narrating an African story.

The festival was meticulously organised, ensuring a smooth transition between performances. An outstanding performance that reflected cultural diversity and inclusion was awarded a prize. Koded Blvck was awarded the Best Cultural Association award for reflecting diverse cultural elements and its dedication to preserving diverse cultural dances and art. The celebration ended with a stunning performance by Nia Pearl, a nationally recognised amapiano artist whose hit songs had the crowd on their feet, marking a powerful close to the evening.

The festival showcased the beauty of diverse cultures and highlighted the importance of arts and cultural expressions in fostering understanding and unity. It was a testament to the power of cultural expression to bring people together, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

### **Commendations**

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to arts and culture associations, residences, and other stakeholders for their sacrifices and dedication to ensure that the event was a success.