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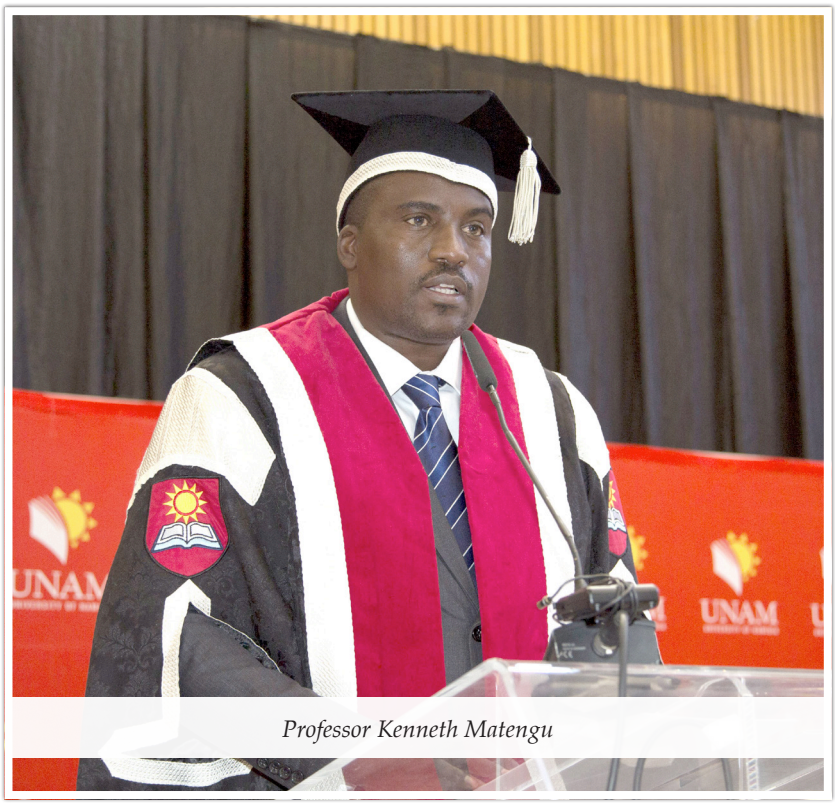
"The UNAM We Want"- Prof. Kenneth Matengu

Vice Chancellor sets the tone for 2019 as he addresses staff and students at the institutions Commencement Ceremony

Mr Kudzai Sibanda
SRC Vice-President, Main Campus



Professor Kenneth Matengu

The Gym Hall at Main Campus was packed to the brim. The morning stood cooler than in previous weeks and the UNAM Vice Chancellor, Professor Kenneth Matengu's voice reverberated across the hall. He welcomed staff back from the just ended holidays, encouraged students to take on their responsibility with passion and integrity, but also cautioned them from falling prey to academic dishonesty. "Passing is not the aim of education, so when you cheat in an exam, you are not helping yourself", he stressed.

"The UNAM We Want" was the thrust of his message, which leaned on the UNAM values, which are professionalism, mutual respect, integrity, transparency and accountability. He asked that all staff should aspire to embody these values in order for UNAM to ascend to greater heights.

Prof. Matengu also re-emphasised the University's revised vision "to be a sustainable international hub of higher education, training, research and innovation by 2030". Further adding that, "We have less than 12 years to achieve this vision". Thereafter he promised staff and students that management will ensure that all structures to support this vision are put in place.

"There are those who advance the idea that higher education must only serve urban areas because that is where the industry is. I reject this idea", remarked Professor Matengu. Further justifying it by saying that Universities have a unique role to promote regional development.

The UNAM Vice President of the Student Representative Council (SRC), at the Main Campus, Mr Kudzai Sibanda, gave a heart-moving speech to welcome students. "Out of every one hundred Namibians, only one ever makes it to University, therefore, count yourself lucky to have secured a spot at the University of Namibia", remarked to Kudzai, in the wake of a thunderous applause. The UNAM SRC from all campuses across the country will be meeting at the SRC Congress later this month to elect an SRC president, who will sit at the Main Campus, all other campuses will have a vice president as principal.

Astrophysicist from Rundu publishes notable research

Graduating from Noordgrens Secondary School in Rundu did not dissuade Dr Eli Kasai from becoming an Astrophysicist, despite peer pressure to rather pursue engineering. He says astronomy has been his passion since the 11th grade, when he first became fascinated with a globe in the school library, "I was amazed that we live on a thing called earth".

Almost two decades later, the boy from Rundu is now one of few Namibian's that can claim to have a PhD in Astrophysics and Cosmology.

His most recent work, include working with Southern African Large Telescope (SALT), which formed the source of the data set he used for his PhD.

The data he took with SALT was utilised in a number of research papers that investigated the nature of dark energy. The papers have been published in reputable and high impact factor journals of the world. In addition to showcasing that SALT is a competitive and competent science instrument on a global scale, the published papers also elevate UNAM's research global ranking greatly, as UNAM appears on the papers as an affiliate institution to the collaboration. This means a lot for the country.

The Southern African Large Telescope is the largest optical telescope in the Southern Hemisphere, and has played an important role as part of the international Dark Energy Survey's (DES, https://www.darkenergysurvey.org/) quest to pin down dark energy, the mysterious force accelerating the expansion of the universe.

As part of the hunt, SALT conducted follow-up spectroscopy of supernovae – stars that explode at the end of their lives – discovered by DES. Supernovae are so bright that they can be seen on the other side of the Universe and

Dr Eli Kasai

astronomers can accurately calculate the distances to a small subclass of them – the so-called Type Ia Supernovae. Once their distances are known, Type Ia Supernovae can be used to measure the acceleration of the expansion of the universe. Sorting through the chaff of variable objects to find and classify the Type Ia jewels was the important role undertaken by SALT and several other of the world's biggest telescopes.

High Tech Digitisation Scanner transforms library services

Equipment donated to the University of Namibia by the Internationale Forschungsbeiträge (an independent NGO) and Basler Afrika Bibliographien have had "a profound impact on UNAM Libraries' efforts to digitise educational and research materials, as well as rare national documents for posterity", claims UNAM Librarian, Mr Josef Ndinoshiho.

The UNAM Library was, late last year, the fortunate recipient of high tech digitisation equipment estimated to be worth more than N$700 000. The equipment consist of an A3 Book Scanner - Zeutchel OS16000 and an A3 Photographic Scanner - Microtek Artiscan 3200XL.

The major functionalities of these scanners are finger removal, as well as page straightening. This allows perfect digitisation of material such as thick books, which are normally difficulty to scan in the mid-section or as more commonly knowns as the gutter.