

DIVERSITY AT THE HEART OF ANNUAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL



The University of Namibia hosted its annual Cultural Festival under the theme "Enhancing Diversity & Cultural Awareness". The Festival that simultaneously took place on all 12 UNAM campuses was a unifying force in fostering the University's stand on diversity.

More than any other event on the UNAM calendar, the three-day festival, provided a platform for the UNAM community to deepen connection, and embrace the different cultures involved.

The Cultural Festival demonstrated an opportunity to share traditional practices in an open and cohesive environment, thus displaying

intercultural relations, respect and mutual understanding. Drawn from inspiration held within the theme, speakers at the opening ceremony were filled with a sense of belonging and pride towards the university.

UNAM Vice Chancellor, Professor Kenneth Matengu, encouraged all stakeholders to use the opportunity to support cultural diversity, understand each other, promote the use of materials that are representative of the various cultural groups at the University and be proactive in listening and welcoming ideas that are different from that of their own. "Cultural

diversity is cherished at UNAM; we are a product of diversity," he added.

SRC president Tuhafeni Kalola thanked the University for uniting people through advocating for diversity across all 12 campuses and its 7 regional centres. "When students and staff members come from different parts of the country and the world, and exchange different cultural practices, this is what we call enhancing diversity," he explains.

The Cultural Festival included various activities such as traditional cuisine and artefact exhibitions, eehungi, live performances and beauty pageant.

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RESEARCH MATTERS FOR NAMIBIA



The University of Namibia cares about relevant research that affects the lives of ordinary Namibians, their health, wealth and the environment. With that in mind, Vice Chancellor, Professor Matengu, has commissioned international collaboration partner Cardiff University's Phoenix Project to review procedures necessary to produce top quality research.

The Phoenix Project has worked with UNAM's Strategic and Physical Planning Unit (SPPU) to carry out an Academic Staff Research Questionnaire. The staff response has been magnificent with a 70% response rate. This response rate is rarely seen in any first ever questionnaire of its type, in any institution. The Faculty of Science produced the best response rate, while there were also excellent response rates from the Faculties of Economic and Management Sciences, Education, as well as Rundu Campus.

Professor Matengu said, "Our staff are engaged and passionate that we do well. This response shows they are

committed to building quality, relevant research for Namibia and to making our University globally competitive. I want research and innovation that will bring wealth to our nation." SPPU Director, Mr Kennedy Mbangi, heartily thanked his staff for their hard work in getting the message out as to the relevance of this questionnaire. He said, "Strategic and Physical Planning are fully committed to supplying top level business intelligence to UNAM leadership, to enable evidence-based decisions."

Phoenix Project lead Professor Judith Hall expressed her delight in assisting UNAM in completing this all important step so successfully, saying "this questionnaire is part of a 4 year change management process designed to make UNAM an African and Global leader in relevant 'people-centred' research."

Finally, this work is crucial to the development of UNAM as a centre of excellence and this questionnaire will be repeated annually.